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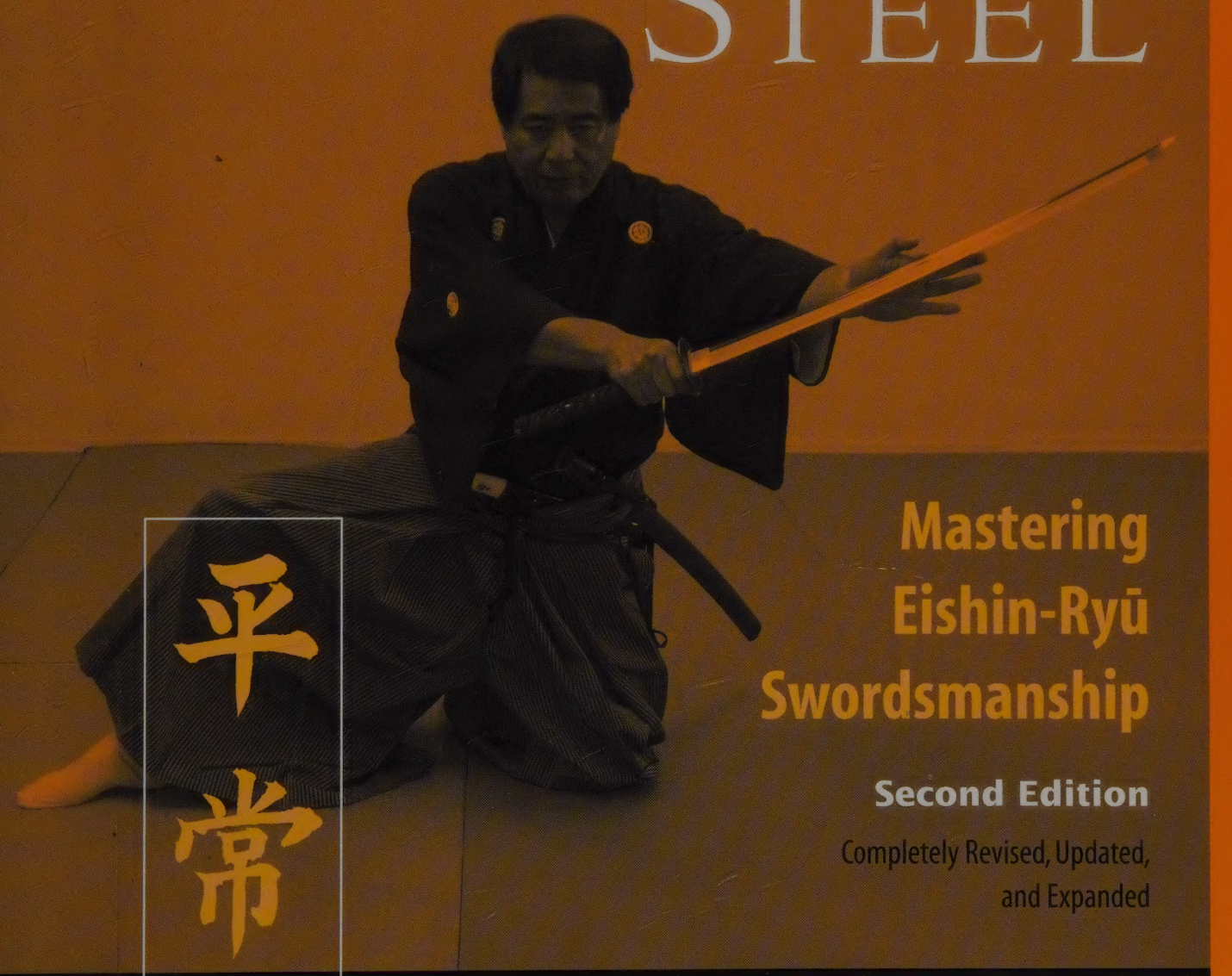

Mastering Eishin-Ryū Swordsmanship

Second Edition

Completely Revised, Updated, and Expanded

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Masayuki Shimabukuro & Leonard J. Pellman

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BLUE SNAKE BOOKS
Berkeley, California

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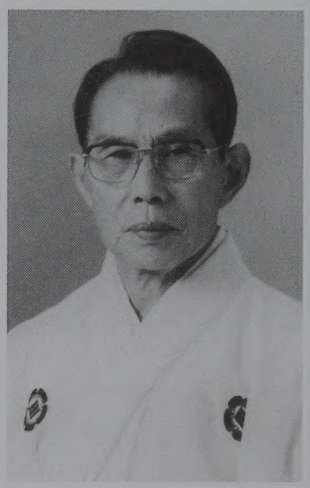
Dedication



This book is dedicated to

Sōshihan Miura Takeyuki Hidefusa

Grandmaster Miura

The present grandmaster of *Musō Jikiden Eishin-Ryū Iaijutsu*, Miura Takeyuki *Sōshihan*, was born January 5, 1922 in Shimane-ken, Japan. At the age of eleven, he entered the Budō Senmon Gakkō, a martial arts training school, where he began his study of *kendō*, the sword-fighting sport based upon *samurai* swordsmanship.

Although it is probable that he studied aspects of *iaidō* during his *kendō* training, as well as during his other martial arts studies, Miura *Hanshi* began his study of *Musō Jikiden Eishin-Ryū Iaijutsu* in 1959 under Narise Sakahiro, who later became the nineteenth grandmaster of the style. He also received instruction from the eighteenth grandmaster, Masaoka Kazumi. Only a year later, Miura *Hanshi* began his training in *Shindō Musō-Ryū Jōdō* under Nakajima Asakichi, who was the most senior disciple of the fifteenth grandmaster of *jōdō*, Shimizu Takatsugu, under whom he also trained.

Following this, Miura *Hanshi* began studying *Koryō Kakushu Bujutsu*, a system that includes a variety of traditional *samurai* weapons, in 1965 under the third grandmaster of *Eishin-Ryū*, Kobashi Nikkan. In May 1970, Miura *Hanshi* undertook the study of *Kukishin-Ryū Bōjutsu* under the instruction of Kanō Takehiko, the eleventh grandmaster of *Yanagi-Ryū*.

Culminating more than forty years of martial arts training, including over fifteen years of *iaidō* and other *samurai* weapons, Miura *Hanshi* founded the Nippon Kobudō Jikishin-Kai in May 1975. He established its *hombu dōjō* (headquarters) on the grounds of Yasaka Jinja, in the Yasaka District of Neyagawa City in Osaka.

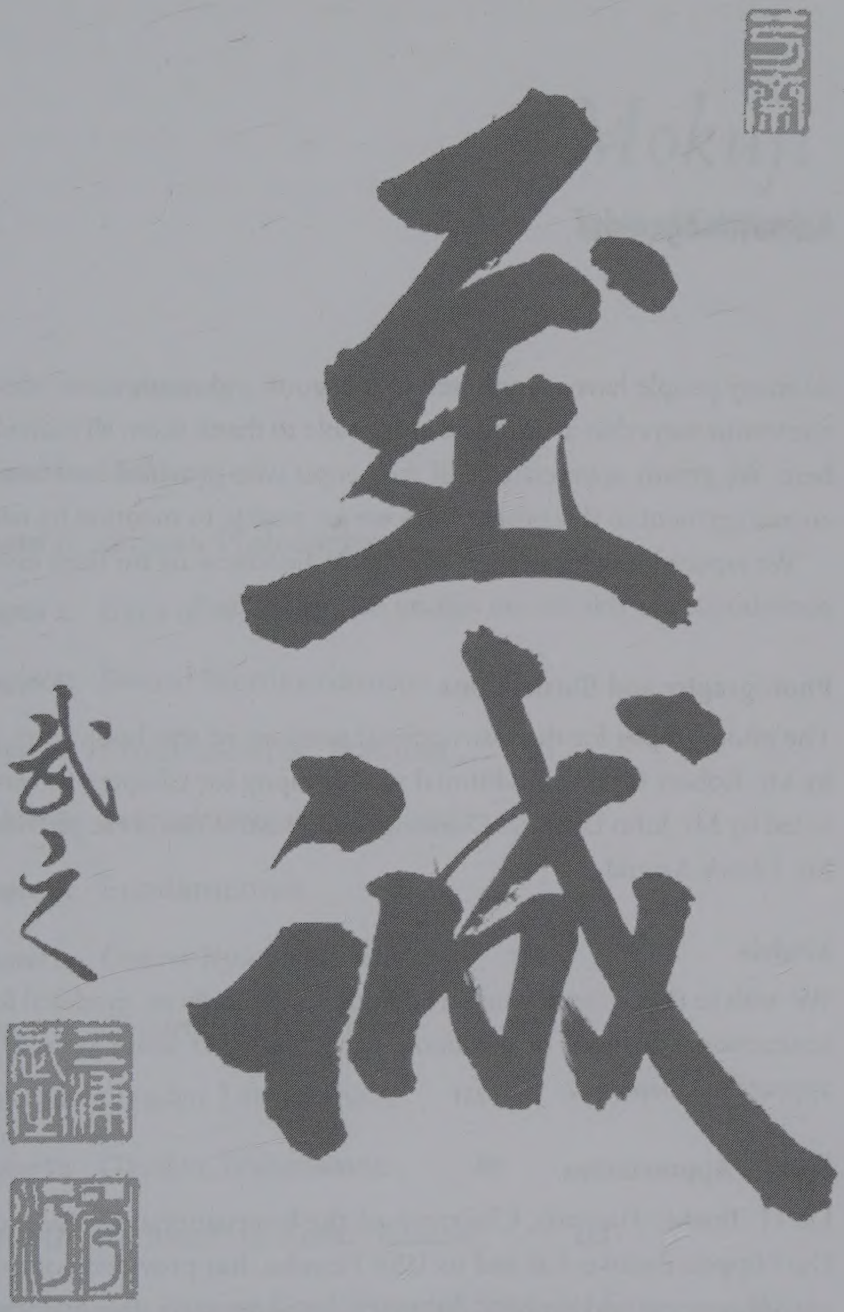
Among the rankings and titles currently held by Miura *Hanshi* are 8th *dan* in *Koryō Kakushin Bujutsu* from the Zen Nippon Kobudō Sōgō Renmei (awarded in May 1975) and in 2004 he was elevated to 10th *dan Hanshi* in *iaidō* by the Dai-Nippon Butoku-Kai. Miura *Hanshi* is held in such high esteem that in 1977 he was named 8th *dan* in Toyama-*Ryū Battō-jutsu*, the modern military form of Japanese swordsmanship, without having requested ranking or even joining the organization.

In addition to honoring Miura *Hanshi* as its highest ranking living member as 10th *dan*, the Dai-Nippon Butoku-Kai has also designated him as *iincho* (Executive Director) for *Kobudō Shinsa* (rank testing in weapons), *Kobudō Kenshō* (weapons seminars), and *Taikai* (championships). In April, 1985 the Butoku-Kai named Miura *Hanshi* as *yōshūsho* (Most Valuable Member). He has served on the Butoku-Kai board of directors since 1990, currently as Advisor Emeritus.

During his many years of teaching, Miura *Hanshi* has also been recognized for his community service contributions with such awards as Honorary Mayor of Kyoto City in April, 1988, Honorary Governor of Kyoto City in April, 1988, and Honorary Governor of Kyoto-*Fu* in April, 1993.

Despite these many honors and accomplishments, Miura *Hanshi* demonstrates tremendous humility in his daily life. His humble attitude is probably best characterized by the fact that he is usually first to bow when greeting someone—even the lowest-ranking of his students, who diligently try to bow before he does. This desire to "out-respect" his students may seem trivial to Westerners, but it makes a powerful impression on his students and those familiar with Japanese culture who know he is entitled to receive their bows first and give little more than a casual nod in return.

If you were to ask Miura *Hanshi* what has been the guiding principle of his life, he likely would answer *"shisei"*—**sincerity**. He has found that sincerity is the secret to success in all areas of life. Sincerity must begin with attitude; then it will naturally infuse all of one's words and deeds. As our tribute to the example and leadership of Miura *Hanshi*, we conclude this biographical sketch with the word *"shisei"* in his own calligraphy.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Acknowledgments

So many people have contributed to this book and its previous edition in numerous ways that it would be impossible to thank them all individually here. We greatly appreciate all of the people who provided assistance and encouragement to this project who we are unable to mention by name.

We especially acknowledge and thank the following for their essential contributions to this second edition of *Flashing Steel*.

Photography and Illustrations

The photographs for the instructional portions of this book were taken by Mr. Robert Morris. Additional photography for Chapter 14 was provided by Mr. John DeLuca. Drawings and illustrations were provided by Mr. Chuck Arnold.

Models

We wish to thank those who, in addition to the authors, modeled for the instructional portions of this book, particularly Mr. Jason Mizuno, who appears in Chapter 12.

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Dr. H. Tesshin Hamada, Chairman of the International Division of the Dai-Nippon Butoku-Kai and its USA Hombu, has provided continuous encouragement and support, for which the authors are deeply grateful.

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Mokuji

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Maegaki

Foreword

More than a decade has passed since the publication of the original edition of *Flashing Steel*. In that time, tremendous growth has occurred in the popularity and practice of *Musō Jikiden Eishin-Ryū Iaijutsu*, and the authors believe that an updated edition was needed.

Readers of the original edition will note that, in some respects, little has changed in the body of this work. The history, philosophy, and techniques of *iaijutsu*, after all, have changed little in the past ten years. It is an art that is more than 450 years old, so the changes during a single decade are subtle—a fact reflected in this second edition in many respects. We have, however, attempted to correct a number of errors and omissions from the first edition and to refine our explanation of many of the concepts presented. Furthermore—and most notably for most readers—we have completely updated and expanded the photographs accompanying the descriptions of all techniques. The photographs in this edition provide considerably more detail than the photographs in the first edition, based on the principle that "a picture is worth a thousand words." In many cases, we have included photographs from both front and side views to give readers a much clearer understanding of the techniques being presented. In the first edition, only the major movements of each technique were depicted in photographs. In the second edition, the photographic sequences are far more complete, with the intermediate stages of each movement shown. We hope and trust these improvements will make this new edition of *Flashing Steel* even more valuable to our readers.

Much has changed in our world since the first edition of *Flashing Steel*. It is now a much smaller and closer world, due to the communication technologies that have become prevalent in the past decade. In 1995, the

Internet was scarcely a factor in most people's lives, having only been made public in 1993. Cell phones were still nearly the size of a brick and not yet in widespread use. In the ensuing decade, most of the industrialized world has been connected by the Internet and mobile communication technologies. Billions of pages of information are now just a click away. Photographs and videos can be readily accessed and downloaded from nearly anywhere on our planet by computer, cell phone, or other handheld devices. Recognizing this, we eliminated the appendix listing member *dōjōs* and instead listed the Jikishin-Kai website (Appendix B), where the most up-to-date information is always available. We have also eliminated some sections of information that are subject to frequent change—such as specific tournament rules and requirements for rank promotion—in favor of providing access to up-to-the-minute directory listings and other information via the Internet.

Sadly, in the passing of a decade the world seems to have become a more violent and dangerous place, as well. In 1995, the public witnessed the first school shooting in the U.S. in over four years. Since 1995, there have been at least two every year, with four in 2006 alone. And, since the World Trade Center attack in 2001, terrorist acts have become almost a daily occurrence somewhere in our world. It may be only that communication is more pervasive and instantaneous, so the news reaches us more quickly and graphically than before, but acts of terrorism and violence that are now an everyday fact of our lives seemed more sporadic and distant ten years ago, as well. These dismaying facts, to us, serve to underscore that the need has never been greater for people to train in traditional martial arts, like *iaijutsu*.

We know of no peer-reviewed studies to substantiate it, but we earnestly believe that few, if any, classically trained martial artists have perpetrated the kinds of violence and terrorism that fill the news broadcasts today. Such acts are contrary to the very nature and purpose of traditional martial arts training. Violence ravages not only its victims, but the souls of the perpetrators. *Bujutsu*, as we point out in *Flashing Steel*, is the art of peacemaking. We continue to promote the practice of *iaijutsu*, not because it trains the body to perform acts of violence, but because it trains the mind and spirit to seek peace and harmony with others while it trains the

body to *defend* against acts of violence. So, as we worked to prepare this revised and updated edition of *Flashing Steel*, it was with the fervent hope that it would spark renewed and widespread interest in classical *bujutsu*, reaching far more people than the first edition, and—even if only in a small way—create a safer, more peaceful world for all of its citizens.

More than ever, we believe that *iaijutsu*, a martial art with little obvious application to self-defense or street fighting, may perhaps be the most practical of all martial arts to practice in the twenty-first century—for all the same reasons we cited in the original edition. It remains simple, serene, and elegant, as it has always been, devoid of grandiose flourishes and spectacular acrobatics that might attract more practitioners in this era of extreme sports. It is difficult for neophytes to see how *iaijutsu* could be used in a street fight, so it may have little allure to those drawn to the practical, though brutal, "mixed martial arts" fighting systems that have grown so popular during this past decade. Yet, we would argue that *iaijutsu*, by shaping the character, ideals, and spirit of a person, imparts far greater and more lasting value than many fighting systems that seem to have much broader appeal in these times.

As this edition goes to press, there seems to be little change in the way the *samurai* arts are presented in entertainment media. In the first edition, we lamented the exaggerated and unrealistic portrayals of the *samurai* arts that such fictional works as the *Ninja Turtles* were presenting to the public. Since that time, the media have been flooded with *anime*, video games, and even a blockbluster feature film featuring *samurai*-based characters that contain inaccurate or grossly exaggerated depictions of sword technique. These create false impressions and expectations that can make legitimate *iaijutsu* seem disappointing to those who come to the *dōjō* hoping to be taught the moves they saw in a movie, *anime*, or video game. On the other hand, perhaps we should be grateful that these media are generating increased interest in classical *bujutsu*. Time alone will tell.

In the first edition of *Flashing Steel*, we tried to make a clear distinction between *iaijutsu*, which we prefer as a descriptor for the art we teach, and *iaidō* which is still the more common term. This seemed to create unintended controversy among some *iaidō* practitioners, if Internet discussion boards and blogs are a meaningful barometer. We were not saying or

implying, as some seem to have inferred, that *iaijutsu* as we practice it is superior in some way to *iaidō* as practiced by others or that *iaidō* lacks some element practiced in *iaijutsu*. They are, in fact, the same art. We were simply trying to explain, perhaps not as clearly as we could have, why we prefer to use the term *iaijutsu* for the art. We believe the focus of *iaijutsu* practice should be to study, contemplate, and understand as deeply as possible the underlying use and combat application of the techniques, and thereby derive the "art" of balance, posture, movement, and harmonization of body, sword, and mind that is *iaijutsu*. By this we did not mean to imply that those not using the term *"iaijutsu"* for the art were not doing so, only that we use the term to help students conceptualize and emphasize this relationship.

Lastly, the goals and limitations of *Flashing Steel* have not changed since its first publication. We want this book to serve you well, to change your life for the better, to guide you to a greater understanding of yourself, others, and the art of *iaijutsu*. We must still remind you that *iaijutsu* cannot be learned from a book alone. It requires the guidance and supervision of a competent instructor. But *Flashing Steel* can be an important resource and supplement to your training—a source of information, a trigger for your memory, a primer on the essential philosophy of the art, and a study guide to its key principles and concepts. Our greatest hope is that it might also serve as an inspiration for you to forge steadfastly ahead in your training and continually seek perfection of your character.

We must also caution you not to attempt any of the techniques presented in this book without the benefit of supervision by a qualified instructor. Whether you are practicing with a *bokken* (wooden sword), *iaitō* (practice sword), or *shinken* (live blade), you are wielding a potentially lethal weapon. The authors and publisher therefore accept no responsibility for any injuries or damages you may incur as a result of attempting any of the techniques described or illustrated in this text.

It is our sincerest hope that you will gain a kernel of wisdom or inspiration from this updated edition of *Flashing Steel*, that your life will be made richer from something you discover—or rediscover—in its pages. As before, we will welcome the opportunity to hear from you, and will do all we can to assist you in your *iaijutsu* training and your life's journey.

Chapter I

Rekishi

History

Iaijutsu is the art of swordsmanship in face-to-face combat, as practiced by the *samurai* of feudal Japan. It is impossible to fully understand the history of *iaijutsu* without at least a cursory knowledge of the history of the *samurai* warrior class and their fabled swords.

The earliest forms of what we now call the *samurai* sword seem to have made their appearance around the beginning of the Heian Period, which began in AD 782. Technically, swords of this period were not truly *samurai* swords since the *samurai* caste itself did not actually arise until the twelfth century. These swords were generally much longer and more deeply curved than the type now used in *iaijutsu* practice. Because of their length and shape, these early swords are usually referred to as *tachi* (large sword).

For the first 250 years of the Heian Period, the Fujiwara clan wielded the true power behind Japan's imperial government, acting as regents to the figurehead emperors. As centuries passed, however, other factions steadily grew in economic and military power, among which the famed Taira and Minamoto families were the most prominent. As the power of the Fujiwara declined in the late Heian Period, disorder quickly arose. By the early eleventh century, it was not uncommon for armed priests and bands of mercenaries to battle in the very streets of Kyoto, Japan's capital city during this period.

In an attempt to restore order, the imperial family wrested control away from the Fujiwara regents for a brief time. But in 1156, the Taira family defeated its chief rival, the Minamoto, and seized power. Another horrendous battle between the two clans followed in 1160, but the Taira remained in control until they were ultimately defeated by the Minamoto in 1185.

This half-century of continual military conflict between the Taira and Minamoto families and their respective vassals gave rise to the *samurai* as a distinct class in Japanese society. This period also witnessed the development of the warrior's code of conduct, which eventually came to be called *Bushidō* (Way of the Warrior). Two of Japan's most famous literary epics, the *Genji Monogatari* (*The Tale of Genji*) and the *Heike Monogatari* (*The Tale of the Heike*) depicted this monumental struggle and the emergence of the *samurai* as the leading social caste. In these and similar works of the period, the heroic deeds of the *samurai* were romanticized and the *samurai* sword itself was elevated to so sacred and mystical a position that it was said to embody the very soul of its owner. It was sometimes even said to possess a soul of its own.

Much of the credit for the excellence of these swords must go to Minamoto Mitsunaka, who not only developed large-scale iron mining on his lands in western Japan, but also cultivated the art of swordsmithing to such a degree that its artisans attained a status akin to priesthood. No sword created before or since has matched the strength and cutting edge of those forged by the master swordsmiths of feudal Japan. Not surprisingly, such weapons were revered almost as objects of worship by their owners, who perceived their unsurpassed cutting ability as resulting from each sword being imbued with a spirit of its own. The long, deeply curved *tachi* slung edge-down at the left hip remained the tangible symbol of *samurai* spirit and power for the next four centuries.

As the subsequent Ashikaga Period (1338–1500) came to a close, Japan was once again embroiled in widespread warfare. Skirmishes had periodically arisen throughout the country since 1400, culminating in the Ōnin Civil War in 1467. Although the Ōnin War ended after ten years, the Ashikaga Shōgunate was bankrupt. The country continued in turmoil and anarchy for the next three decades leading into the Sengoku (Warring States) Period. A full century of incessant warfare was obviously a propitious time for the *samurai* caste, and this period gave rise to numerous schools and styles of swordsmanship.

At the height of this tumultuous period, Hayashizaki Jinsuke Minamoto no Shigenobu (usually referred to as Hayashizaki Jinsuke or occasionally as Hayashizaki Shigenobu) was born in Hayashizaki Village in Okushu

Dewa (near modern-day Murayama City, Yamagata Prefecture). He was born in the year 1549 to a *samurai* family under the ruling Minamoto clan. After his father was killed in a duel, young Hayashizaki was determined to avenge his father's death. Knowing he would need a significant advantage to defeat his father's killer, Hayashizaki entered the local Shintō shrine, Hayashizaki Jinja. There he spent 100 days in prayer and practice to develop the techniques of drawing and cutting in a single motion that we now call *iaijutsu* or *iaidō*. Hayashizaki prevailed in avenging his father's death, and his style of swordsmanship came to be known as *Hayashizaki-Ryū*.

Less than fifty years later, the most significant development in the history of *iaijutsu* occurred. Along with the introduction of firearms into Japan by the Portuguese, the Sengoku Period also witnessed a significant change in sword design. Blades were made shorter and a little straighter in shape than the *tachi*, and were worn with their cutting edge upward. Naturally with the advent of this newer style of sword, called *katana* or *daitō* (the weapon most commonly known as the "*samurai* sword"), improved techniques of swordsmanship were required to make the best use of this radical change in blade design.

Hasegawa Eishin, the seventh-generation successor to *Hayashizaki-Ryū*, widely considered to be nearly equal in skill with the *tachi* to the style's founder, adapted *iaijutsu* techniques to the shorter *katana*. Because of his great skill and his modification of sword techniques for the newer design, the style thereafter became known as *Hasegawa-Ryū* or *Eishin-Ryū* in his honor. His fame was such that Toyotomi Hideyoshi, the supreme military commander who ruled a recently unified Japan from 1582 to 1598, invited Hasegawa to demonstrate *Eishin-Ryū iaijutsu* in Edo (present-day Tokyo) not long after moving his capital there in 1590. Toyotomi was so impressed with Hasegawa's skill that he bestowed on him the title *Musō Ken* (Sword Without Equal).

Eishin's style is considered unmatched and has been passed down through an unbroken succession of grandmasters to the present time. It is now known as *Musō Jikiden Eishin-Ryū Iaijutsu*, or "Unequalled Direct-Lineage Eishin-Style *Iaijutsu*." (A complete listing of the genealogy of *Musō Jikiden Eishin-Ryū Iaijutsu* is presented on pages 8 and 9. Although each suc-

cessive grandmaster has left his imprint on the style, this brief history is limited to those whose impact was most significant to the evolution of the style.

With the fall of the Tokugawa Shōgunate in 1868, rule again shifted from the military back into the hands of the imperial line. One of the first decrees of the newly enthroned Emperor Meiji was the disarming of the *samurai* caste to prevent their return to power. However, recognizing the historical and cultural importance of the *samurai* to Japan, and perhaps also realizing the future social and economic strength to be gained from the influence of *Bushidō*, Emperor Meiji concurrently established the *Dai Nippon Butoku-Den* (Greater Japan Institute of Martial Virtues) as a means to preserve and govern the instruction of traditional Japanese martial arts. In order to teach martial arts, especially in the Japanese school system, it was necessary to be properly accredited by the *Butoku-Den*. Although temporarily disbanded by the American occupation forces at the close of World War II, the organization was re-established at the end of Allied occupation by the Emperor Shōwa (better known as Hirohito in the West) under the slightly altered name *Dai Nippon Butoku-Kai* (Greater Japan Martial Virtues Association). At the time of this writing, the *Butoku-Kai* is chaired by Higashifushigi Jigō, the younger brother of the late Emperor Shōwa's wife, and remains the most prestigious martial arts organization in Japan.

Although the lineage of *Eishin-Ryū* has remained unbroken from the time of Hayashizaki Jinsuke down the present grandmaster, Miura Takeyuki *Hanshi*, the style has not been entirely free of controversy. Through the years, several grandmasters have founded their own styles of *iaidō*, the earliest being Tamiya Heibei, who is considered the second grandmaster of *Eishin-Ryū*, when it was still called *Hayashizaki-Ryū*.

In the late eighteenth century, a major schism occurred within the ranks of *Eishin-Ryū*. The tenth grandmaster, Hayashi Yasudayū, and the eleventh grandmaster, Ōguro Motoemon, both died shortly after one another in 1776. Following their deaths, two branches of *Eishin-Ryū* arose, each of which considered its grandmaster to be the twelfth successor to the *Eishin-Ryū* lineage. One of these branches, *Shimomura-ha*, faded into oblivion earlier this century, while *Tanimura-ha* has survived to the present.

In more recent times, another controversy has arisen. When the seventeenth grandmaster, Ōe Masamichi, died in 1927, two of his students separately carried on the *Eishin-Ryū* tradition of *Tanimura-ha*. Masaoka Kazumi was widely considered the best swordsman among Ōe's students, and most members of the style gravitated to him as eighteenth grandmaster after Ōe's death. Another student, who had personally attended to Ōe during his battle with cancer, came into possession of the style's credentials, and many chose to follow him as eighteenth grandmaster. As a result, two branches now claim to carry on the traditions and lineage of *Musō Jikiden Eishin-Ryū*. A genealogy showing the developments following the eleventh grandmaster, Ōguro Motoemon, is presented on page 10.

However, it was Masaoka Kazumi (of Ōe's and the authors' lineage) who was invited to represent *Musō Jikiden Eishin-Ryū Iaijutsu* when the major *iaidō* styles convened to jointly create the *Seitei Iai Kata* (Chapter 15) for the *Zen Nippon Kendō Renmei* (All-Japan Kendo Federation). In addition, Masaoka's successor, Narise Sakahiro, was elected to a remarkable three terms of office as president of the *Dai-Nippon Iaidō Yaegaki-Kai*, the most widely recognized *iaidō* organization of its time. Currently, the *Dai-Nippon Butoku-Kai*, Japan's oldest and most prestigious martial arts organization, recognizes Miura Takeyuki *Hanshi*, Narise's successor as twentieth grandmaster, as the official representative of the style, and has unanimously awarded him a 10th *dan Hanshi* ranking, the highest of any living member of the *Butoku-Kai*.

In 1975, Miura *Hanshi* coined the name *Nippon Kobudō Jikishin-Kai* for the organization to carry on the traditions and instruction of *Musō Jikiden Eishin-Ryū Iaijutsu*. This name translates literally as "Japanese Ancient Weapons (meaning *samurai* weapons) True Spirit Association," although the term *"jikishin"* also carries such nuances as "pure heart" and "straight mind." The concepts of true spirit, pure heart, and clear mind certainly embody Miura *Hanshi's* emphasis on sincerity, but his choice of this name has a much more profound origin.

There is a well-known Zen saying, *Jikishin kore dōjō nari*: A true spirit [pure heart] is a training place. His use of this term was intended to convey the multifaceted meanings which lie beneath the surface of this ancient saying.

First, this is an admonition to make your mind straight—that is, focused and purposeful, not easily driven off course by the winds of change, nor buffeted by the tides of adversity. Your mind should not be swayed by your environment, but remain unyielding to outside pressures and temptations.

Second, your mind, heart, and spirit must be pure. The most obvious attributes of a traditional *dōjō* are that it is clean, uncluttered, and totally functional. Like a *dōjō*, your heart and mind should exude the simple beauty that comes from simplicity and clarity of purpose. Your spirit should shine like a *dōjō* floor that has been polished by the years of the sweat and effort that has gone into your training.

The *dōjō* often seems harsh and punishing, rewarding diligent training only with bruises, aches, and calluses. Yet this apparent harshness disguises the true gentility and compassion of the *dōjō*, which smiles down from its rafters on your toil and disappointment, cherishing the knowledge that you are refining your mind, body, and spirit in the crucible of trial and perseverance. In the same way as the *dōjō*, your mind must be gentle and compassionate toward others, yet strong enough to abide their hardship and pain when it is truly in their best interest.

The open, spacious feeling of a *dōjō* should also reflect the openness of your mind. Your mind should be open both in the sense of being uncluttered by unnecessary thoughts and feelings—especially destructive ones like doubt, anger, and fear—and in the sense of being open to learn. In this way, your mind will continue to expand as you learn, experience, and grow. This is the true meaning of *ku no kokoro* or *mushin* (empty mind). This does not mean that there is nothing there; but that in the spaciousness of your mind, there is ever-increasing room for more.

Finally, the practice of *jikishin* is the very core of good swordsmanship, as best described in another ancient saying, *Kokoro tadashi karazareba, ken mata tadashi karazu*: If your heart is true, your sword will also be true.

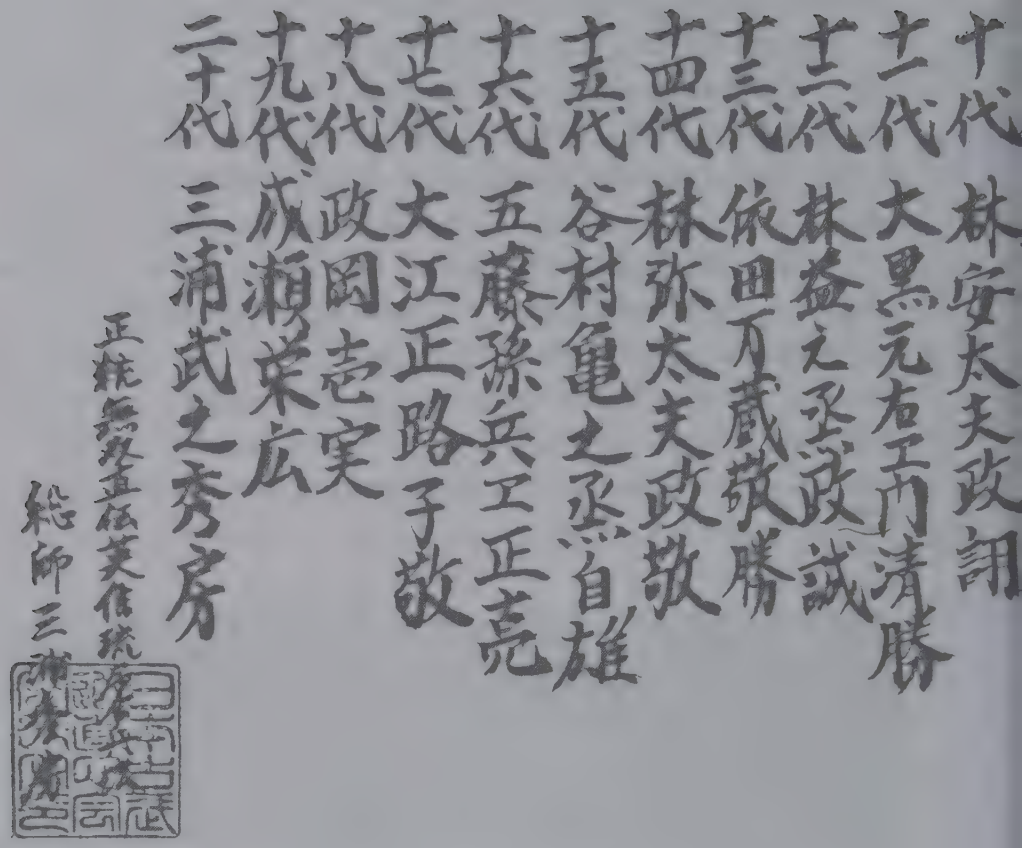
In addition to carrying on these traditions and practices, Miura *Hanshi* also undertook the construction of the *hombu dōjō* (headquarters/training center) on the grounds of Yasaka Jinja in Osaka.

To reach this *dōjō*, you must walk down a narrow path through the grounds of the shrine. As you pass through the gardens of the shrine, you feel a tranquil relief from the busy Osaka streets that you just left behind.

The *dōjō* itself, though only about twenty years old, has the appearance and character of its surroundings, which includes buildings hundreds of years old. By the time you ascend its steps, you can almost picture yourself transported into the realm of the *samurai* over four centuries ago.

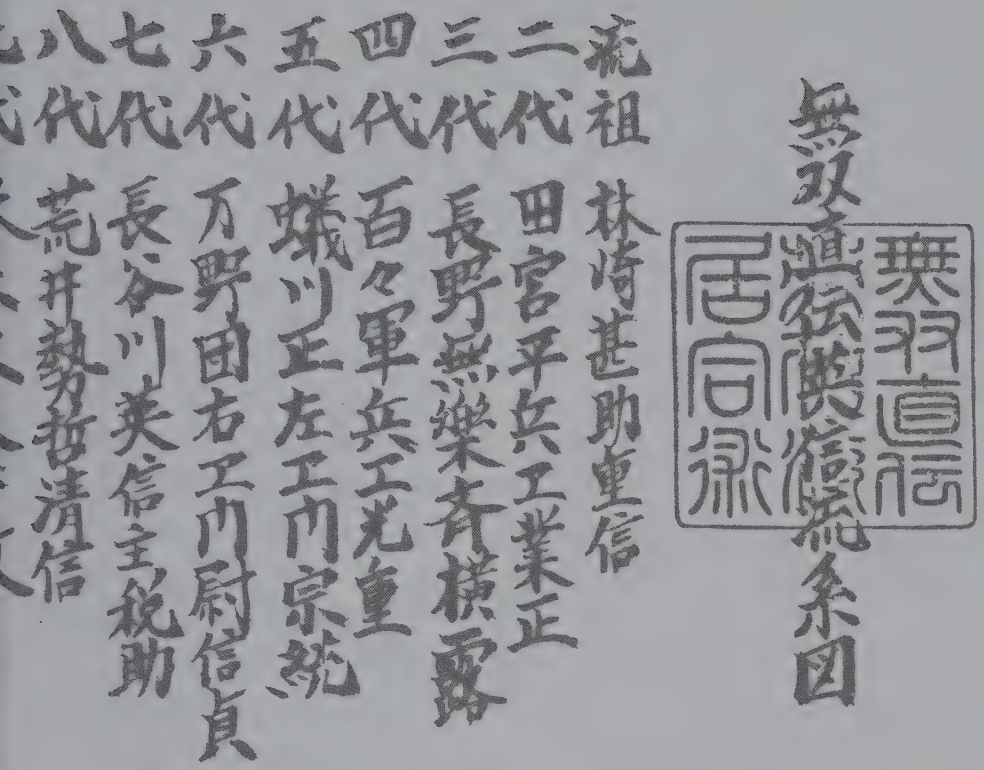
Once inside, there is a palpable sense of respite from the workaday world only a hundred yards away. Relieved of the pressures of modern daily life, your mind is free to focus on training. As you grow attuned to the traditional surroundings (Figure 1-1), the aroma of wood and *tatami*, and the quiescent sounds of the others training alongside you, it is difficult not to feel a sense of connection to the centuries of masters and disciples who preceded you in the art of *iaijutsu* and have passed down its rich heritage to the present generation, who will in turn pass it on to the generations to come.

Figure 1-1 Dōjō Interior



Genealogy of *Musō Jikiden Eishin-Ryū Iaijutsu*

Ryūsō:	Hayashizaki Jinsuke Shigenobu
Ni-dai:	Tamiya Heibei Shigemasa
San-dai:	Nagano Murakusai Kinrō
Yon-dai:	Momo Gumbei Mitsushige
Go-dai:	Arikawa Shōzaemon Munetsugu
Roku-dai:	Manno Danemon no Jō Nobusada
Nana-dai:	Hasegawa Eishin Shūzei no Suke
Hachi-dai:	Arai Seitetsu Kiyonobu
Kyū-dai:	Hayashi Rokudayū Morimasa
Jū-dai:	Hayashi Yasudayū Seishō
Jūichi-dai:	Ōguro Motoemon Kiyokatsu

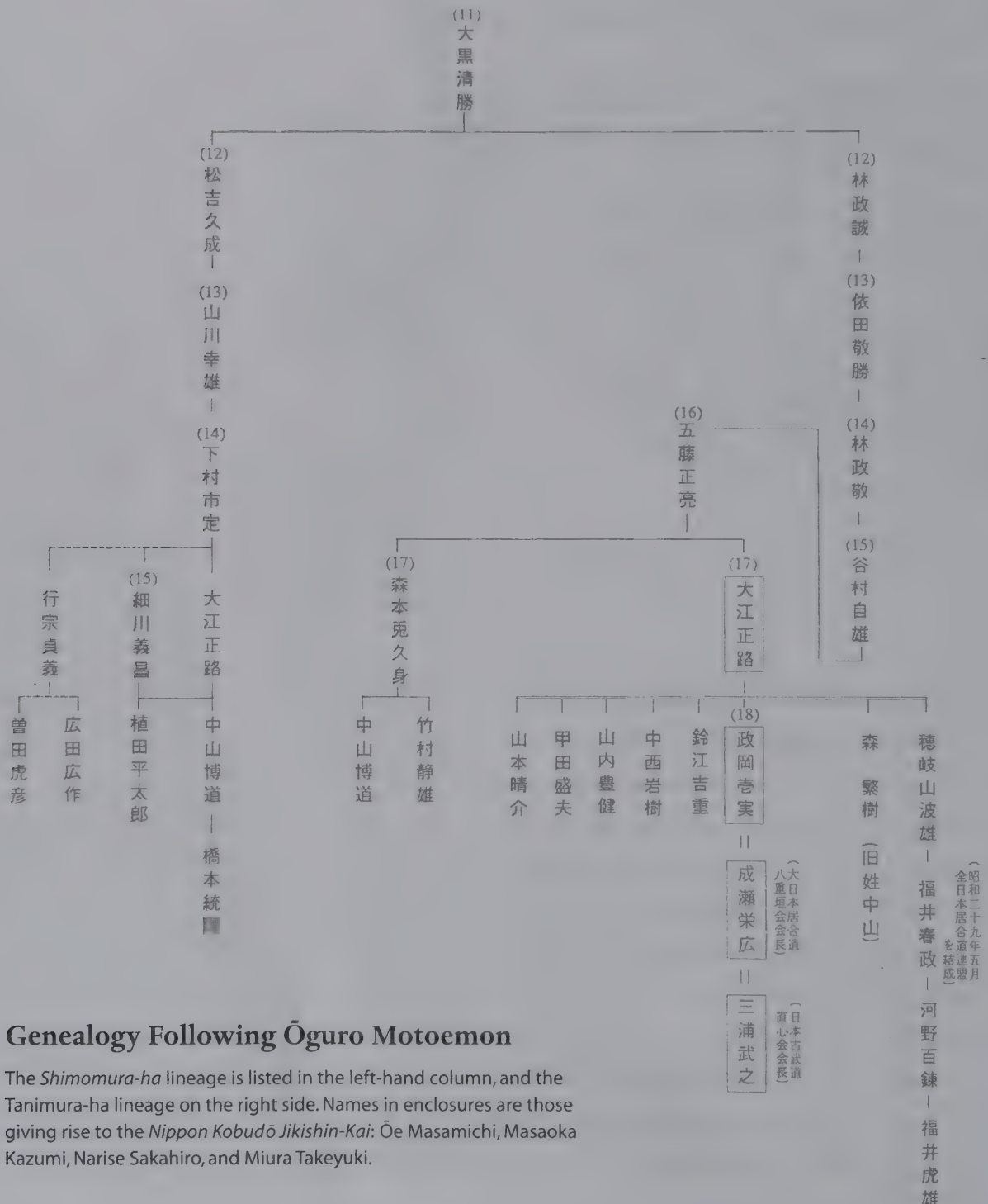


Jūni-dai: Hayashi Masu no Jō Masanari
Jūsan-dai: Yoda Manzō Yorikatsu
Jūyon-dai: Hayashi Yadayū Masayori
Jūgo-dai: Tanimura Kame no Jō Yorikatsu
Jūroku-dai: Gotō Magobei Masasuke
Jūnana-dai: Ōe Masamichi Shikei
Jūhachi-dai: Masaoka Kazumi
Jūkyū-dai: Narise Sakahiro
Nijū-dai: Miura Takeyuki Hidefusa

Seitō Musō Jikiden Eishin-Ryū Iai Heihō Sōshi, Miura Hidefusa

Calligraphy by Miura Takeyuki Hanshi

無双直伝英信流の系図



Genealogy Following Ōguro Motoemon

The *Shimomura-ha* lineage is listed in the left-hand column, and the Tanimura-ha lineage on the right side. Names in enclosures are those giving rise to the *Nippon Kobudō Jikishin-Kai*: Ōe Masamichi, Masaoka Kazumi, Narise Sakahiro, and Miura Takeyuki.

人生観

Chapter 2

Jinseikan

Iaijutsu Philosophy

It is highly unlikely that you will ever slip into your *hakama*, sling your *katana* at your side, and saunter down the street prepared to use your *iaijutsu* skills to defend yourself or take up the cause of your lord like the *samurai* of old. If you do, you are likely to be arrested! So what benefit is there in *iaijutsu* training?

The fact that you will probably never engage in a real sword battle may, paradoxically, be the greatest benefit of sword training! Those who train in martial arts that have obvious practical application in current times, such as *karate-dō* or *jūjutsu*, too often find themselves so involved in developing skill in the physical self-defense applications of their art that they overlook or minimize their mental and spiritual training. Especially in the West, martial arts training often merely gives lip service to these vital elements of mental and spiritual training. In recent years, far greater emphasis seems to be placed on the street-fighting applications of so-called mixed martial arts, and the benefits of traditional martial arts training have been minimized and even ridiculed. The opposite is true of *iaijutsu*.

By its very nature, as a martial art that is highly ritualized, moderately paced, and without obvious "street" application, *iaijutsu* provides an ideal environment in which to refine mental and spiritual discipline. All martial arts are supposed to develop these qualities, but few seem to adequately emphasize them in modern practice.

This is not to say that *iaijutsu* is neither practical nor beneficial. Far from it! *Iaijutsu* develops qualities and skills which are not only useful for self-defense, if needed, but also improve one's experience of daily life. For

this reason, training in this seemingly "impractical" art is far more practical than learning "street-fighting" techniques for anyone but a thug.

BUDŌ NO ARIKATA

Purpose of Martial Arts

To understand the purpose of martial arts training, we need only understand the goal of martial arts: to win!

It is that simple.

At the same time, it is far more complex. Obviously, we learn a martial art in order to prevail in an encounter. We certainly don't spend years training in order to be defeated! However, martial arts training involves much more than merely learning how to injure or kill another person in battle.

A Japanese legend relates that, centuries ago, there were two *samurai* who were closer than brothers. As they matured and prepared to embark on their *musha shūgyō*—the customary travels to perfect their skills—it was apparent that their paths would separate for many years. So before departing they met by a quiet stream and vowed to meet again on that very spot twelve years later to share tales of their training and exploits. Just as they had vowed, they returned to the bank of the stream on the very day twelve years later, but found that a recent rain had swollen the gentle stream into a raging torrent, barring their way to the exact spot of their last meeting.

Determined to live up to the letter and spirit of his vow, and to demonstrate the incredible skills he had mastered during their twelve-year separation, one *samurai* dashed to the river and made a spectacular leap that carried him over the deadly current and safely to the other side. The jump far exceeded today's Olympic records and should have amazed his friend. Instead, the other *samurai* calmly walked a few paces upstream and hired a boatman to row him across for five *mon* (about fifty cents).

The skills one man spent a lifetime of sacrifice and dedication to develop could be duplicated effortlessly for a few pennies. Similarly, if our goal is merely to kill people, we can simply purchase a gun, rather than invest years of training. So, the first lesson of *iaijutsu* is to be certain that your training goals are worthwhile.

Next, we must realize that "winning" is not merely defeating an opponent; it is perfecting yourself—your personal character, as well as your skills—to the degree that an opponent cannot prevail against you. Yet, winning is still more than this.

In *iaijutsu*, there is a saying, *Kachi wa saya no naka ni ari:* Victory comes while the sword is still in the scabbard. Physical skills alone, no matter how highly perfected, are simply not enough. There is always someone more skillful, or someone with a dirty trick for which you are unprepared. But attitude is more important than aptitude in real combat. We have all seen encounters reminiscent of that between David and Goliath, where the underdog defeated a far mightier opponent through sheer determination and faith.

Without the courage or determination to use it, a high degree of skill is useless. It would be like painting a great masterpiece, then storing it away where no one can ever see it. This is not only a waste of time, talent, and effort, but a loss of something valuable to humankind.

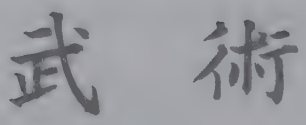
So the higher purpose of *iaijutsu* is to develop the mind and spirit of a warrior, an attitude and strength of character that wins the battle before it begins. This is no simple matter to achieve. It takes years of daily training to cultivate these attributes and to rid oneself of attitudes and reactions, such as anger, fear, selfishness, jealousy, and hate, that are counterproductive or self-destructive.

Furthermore, winning must be accomplished without trying to win! This concept at first seems self-contradictory. How can you be victorious, after all, if you don't even try to win? The answer is that the key to winning a battle is a steadfast determination to not lose.

This is more than just a semantic difference; it requires a profound shift of focus and commitment. When you are trying to win, you will be inclined to take unnecessary risks in your determination to defeat your opponent. But when you are instead dedicated to not losing the encounter, you have the luxury of waiting for your opponent to make a mistake that you can then exploit to achieve victory.

However, *iaijutsu* training demands a still higher and more noble purpose than merely winning (or not losing) battles. The great Chinese tactician Sun Tzu said that the highest principle in the *Art of War* is to win

without a battle. This is the true ideal of *iaijutsu*, as embodied in the Chinese ideograms for "martial art."



BU "Martial" JUTSU "Art"

The symbol on the left, above, which we translate as "martial" (the *"bu"* in *budō*) was formed from the two characters below:

TOMERU "Prevent" HOKO "Conflict"

Thus, the term "martial arts," from the earliest of times, has truly meant "the art of conflict prevention" or perhaps more elegantly, "the art of peacemaking." The way *iaijutsu* training accomplishes this goal can only be discovered by understanding the underlying ideals of the martial arts.

SHŪGYŌ NO MOKUTEKI

Ideals of Martial Arts

Japan's most famous and revered *samurai*, Miyamoto Musashi, once asked his young disciple, Jōtarō, what his goal in life was. Without hesitation, the teenager replied, "To be like you!"

"Your goal is too small," Musashi scolded him. He went on to admonish his student to "aspire to be like Mt. Fuji, with such a broad and solid foundation that the strongest earthquake cannot move you, and so tall that the greatest enterprises of common men seem insignificant from your lofty perspective. With your mind as high as Mt. Fuji," he explained, "you can see all things clearly. And you can see all the forces which shape events; not just the things happening near you."

Walking together along a twisting mountain path, Musashi and Jōtarō soon came to a bend at which an enormous overhanging boulder loomed

above the path. At first glance, the boulder seemed precariously suspended above them, as if the slightest jar would break it loose and send it crashing down to annihilate them. Yet, a closer look showed it to be so firmly embedded in the mountainside that it would take the forces of nature eons to work it free. Nevertheless, Jōtarō scuttled nervously along the path beneath it, anxious to be out from under it. As Musashi calmly followed, he noticed his disciple's natural reaction to the threatening presence of the massive rock and used it to reinforce his lesson.

"You should train to become like this boulder," Musashi told Jōtarō, "with most of your strength hidden and so deeply rooted that you are immovable, yet so powerful that what can be seen will make men cringe to walk in your shadow."

This, Musashi felt, was the ultimate goal of training, to be so highly skilled and mentally developed that your mere presence was intimidating and no man would dare challenge you. And, indeed, Musashi reached, even exceeded, this level of personal development during his colorful life. Clearly, someone this highly trained will have to fight few, if any, battles to achieve life's victories.

Later in life, it was this very quality that Musashi looked for in selecting a student to train. After he had retired to refine his character through the arts of painting, sculpting, and calligraphy, Musashi accepted an invitation from the Kumamoto *daimyō* (feudal ruler) to come to his castle and train an elite corps of samurai to become the *daimyō*'s personal retainers. So great was the *daimyō's* respect for Musashi that he had all of his *samurai*—several hundred of them—form a processional line on both sides of the street, extending from the castle gates to the town. As Musashi strode between the two columns of men, each bowed reverently at his passage. But, as Musashi's keen eye detected, even these elite *samurai* averted their gaze from his bold stare. Only one among them seemed not to be intimated by Musashi's mere countenance.

When Musashi finally reached the *daimyō* and his counselors, the *daimyō* asked if any of his samurai had particularly impressed Musashi, perhaps testing to see if Musashi could discern his most skillful swordsmen at just a passing glance. Musashi led the *daimyō* back to the one man who had not cast his eyes down as Musashi passed.

Osaka Castle

"This man!" Musashi announced.

"I don't understand," the *daimyō* blustered, "He has little training and only modest rank. In fact, his main duty is stonecutting for the castle."

"This may be so," Musashi answered, "But he is your best trained *samurai*." Turning to the man, Musashi asked him, "Tell me, how do you train that you have no fear of death?"

"I hardly train at all," the *samurai* admitted humbly, "When I go to bed each night, I simply unsheathe my sword and hang it above my face by a slender thread. Then I lie down beneath it and gaze up at its point until I fall asleep."

"This is indeed your best-trained *samurai*," Musashi told the *daimyō* with a knowing smile. "He alone of all your men faces death every day, for he knows that it would take little for that tiny thread to break and end his life. I will train this man to be your personal bodyguard."

However, as Musashi continued to mature, he found—to his great dismay—that even such an incredible level of personal development was not enough. Despite the fact that even the bravest *samurai* could not bear to gaze upon Musashi in awe of him, he was still challenged many times

and forced to kill more than sixty opponents in sword duels. He found that his reputation and his aura of power and invincibility attracted fame-seekers like moths to a flame. Obviously, anyone who could defeat the legendary Miyamoto Musashi would be instantly famous, able to found his own school of swordsmanship, and command riches, position, and prestige as a high-ranking retainer to any *daimyō*, or perhaps even the Shōgun. So, throughout most of his life, Musashi found himself beleaguered by challengers betting their lives against a chance at such fame and fortune.

Several years after his encounter with the Kumamoto *daimyō*, Musashi was once again in the mountains seeking to perfect his character. Together with his life-long friend and mentor, the priest Sōhō Takuan, he was seated beside a gentle stream with a small, tranquil waterfall, engaged in *zazen* meditation. As they meditated, Musashi's keen senses alerted him to another presence nearby. Without disturbing the serenity of his meditation, Musashi allowed his gaze to fall upon a deadly viper slithering into the clearing from some shrubbery near Takuan.

Knowing that the slightest movement might frighten the venomous snake into attacking his friend, Musashi carefully controlled his spirit, watching the serpent in utter stillness. He was surprised to see a faint smile appear on Takuan's lips as he, too, became aware of the snake's approach and calmly watched it crawl across his own thighs. Even more amazing than the priest's complete tranquility in the face of mortal danger was the snake's casual acceptance of Takuan as a natural part of its surroundings.

After slithering across the priest, the lethal serpent continued on its winding course toward Musashi. But, several feet away, the snake sensed Musashi's presence and recoiled, preparing to attack the seated *samurai*. Musashi gave no reaction. Even though his spirit was undisturbed by the ominous, bared fangs of the viper, Musashi's power, skill, and menace were so palpable to the snake that it scurried away into the bushes like a terrified rabbit. Most men would have been proud to possess such an intimidating aura, but Musashi felt only shame as he suddenly understood his own greatest shortcoming.

"What troubles you so?" asked Takuan, sensing his friend's mood.

"All my life," Musashi lamented, "I have trained myself to develop such

skill that no man would ever dare attack me. And now that I have reached my goal, all living things instinctively fear me. You saw how the snake fled from me!"

"I saw it," the priest said. "Since it dared not attack you, you defeated it without striking a blow. And because of your great skill, both you and the snake are alive now." Although he already knew the answer, Takuan asked, "Why does that sadden you?"

"Because I am so strong that no one can ever grow close to me. I can never have true peace." Musashi pointed a finger at the priest. "Not like you," he said with admiration, "You did not fear the snake, nor did the snake fear you. Your spirit is so calm, so natural, that the snake treated you no differently than the rocks, the trees, or the wind. People accept you that way, too."

Takuan only smiled, pleased that his friend had made such an important self-discovery.

Musashi spent the rest of his days training to perfect a spirit like that of his friend Takuan. This mental state, the ideal to which all martial artists aspire, is called *heijōshin*. Literally translated, it means "constant stable spirit," but such a translation hardly does it justice. The nuances of the Japanese language help greatly in understanding the full nature of *heijōshin*, a word comprised of three *kanji* (ideograms):

Hei Jō Shin

平 常 心

平 *Hei* has numerous related meanings in Japanese: "peaceful," "calm," "steady," and so on. The closest English equivalent, however, may be "level" or "even," since these terms can be used in such ways as "level-headed" and "even-handed" in English.

常 *Jō* has a more precise meaning, at least in terms of its English translations: "always," "constant," or "continually."

Shin translates both literally and figuratively as "heart," with almost all the same nuances. Thus, to Asians and Westerners alike, *shin* is understood as more than simply the internal organ that pumps blood, but connotes the mind, the spirit, the emotions, the character—the whole inner essence of the individual.

Heijōshin is a concept of the whole inner being of a person being continually at peace. For lack of a more effective translation, we will simply call it "peace of mind." However, the fullness of *heijōshin* warrants a more detailed explanation.

HEIJŌSHIN

Peace of Mind

Heijōshin, true peace of mind, is probably best understood not as a single attribute, but as a combination—or rather the culmination—of several character traits. Each of the aspects that together create *heijōshin* may take years of effort, experience, and disappointment to develop, making *heijōshin* the product of a lifetime of patient training. To achieve genuine peace of mind requires a high degree of mental development in three key areas: (1) the intellect, (2) the emotions, and (3) that indefinable element we usually call "character" or "integrity." And these three areas must be developed in balance.

Why is *heijōshin* so important?

As we age, our physical prowess, no matter how great, will eventually lessen. This is especially evident in professional sports, where few athletes enjoy a career longer than ten years. With diligence, on the other hand, we can constantly improve our character and our mental prowess. And we can never be certain that ill health or a serious accident might not leave us with drastically impaired physical ability. The key to lifelong fruitfulness and happiness, then, is not in our physical skills, but in our mental development.

Cultivating *heijōshin* is far more important to the martial artist than merely perfecting skill with a sword. *Heijōshin* is an unlimited quality, as

there is always room for more knowledge, greater compassion, stronger love, and a higher level of character development.

How do you obtain *heijōshin*?

Heijōshin is not only difficult to attain, but there is no simple, precise method to develop it. This is a stumbling block to many Westerners, especially in America, where people have become culturally conditioned to a "quick-fix" approach to nearly everything. If something cannot be achieved with a wonder drug, an overnight miracle, in three steps, or a five-day program, it seems too difficult and time-consuming to attempt.

So, to begin with, you might as well understand that *heijōshin* demands a lifestyle change: a life of discipline, effort, sacrifice, and commitment. Such a commitment to developing excellence of character sets the martial artist—particularly the *iaijutsu* practitioner—apart from most people in a confused and unhappy society.

Not only is there no easy way to develop *heijōshin*, but for each of us the path will be different, because of our different personalities, experiences, and circumstances. To further complicate matters, *heijōshin* is rife with paradoxes. The first of these is the nature of *heijōshin* itself: it is the product of diligent training and continual effort to reshape the mind, yet in the end it must be completely natural and unforced. So how do we practice something that must occur spontaneously?

The tales of Miyamoto Musashi contain some clues that may help answer this question. If you read them again now, you may notice that Musashi did not train himself in the "art" of *heijōshin* itself, but rather in the elements which lead to its development. In effect, in another of its paradoxes, while *heijōshin* is the true goal of martial arts training, it is achieved as a by-product of training.

If *heijōshin* were merely a single attribute, it could be practiced and learned, like multiplication tables. But *heijōshin* is itself the by-product of a person's complete inner being. It can only be achieved by refining that whole inner essence. And this can only be accomplished if one's intellect, emotions, and character are developed in balance.

Why is martial arts training the best method for developing *heijōshin*?

When a person realizes the true nature of martial arts training, and practices accordingly, it leads to a fuller understanding of the nature of life itself. Martial arts are concerned essentially with life and death. This is most apparent, perhaps, in *iaijutsu* training, since the outcome of a sword battle is clearly that one opponent lives and the other dies. This is not the case with *karate-dō* or other "empty-hand" arts, in which the "loser" might merely be rendered incapable of continuing the fight.

So if the *iaijutsu* student is serious about his or her training, each *kata* (practice pattern) represents far more than simply swinging a sword around. It is a symbolic battle in which your opponent will most certainly die. Will you end his life without good cause? Will you throw his family into turmoil and perhaps ruin over some triviality? When you have developed true compassion for others, then train in a life-or-death context, you gain a whole new appreciation of life—both your own and the lives of others.

Isn't "life-or-death" training unrealistic in modern society?

The irony of a comfortable life is that few people, other than the best-trained martial artists, truly understand how tenuous life is. The *samurai* understood this, because he was trained to realize that each new day might bring death. The pioneers of the Old West understood it, because of the tremendous hardships and uncertainties they faced. But in an age and environment in which hunger, disease, and most of our mortal enemies have been all but vanquished, we seem to have become blinded to the precariousness of our existence. Even when we read of a major celebrity succumbing to AIDS, a terrible plane crash, a terrorist bombing, or a drive-by gang shooting, most of us believe that "it can't happen to me."

The life-or-death awareness of *iaijutsu* training allows us to clearly see that death is, quite literally, only one heartbeat away. Part of *heijōshin* is coming to grips with the inevitability of death. That it will eventually claim the "high" and "low" alike—movie stars, drug addicts, sports heroes, bank robbers, politicians, business executives, and even ourselves.

Once we understand how fragile our lives are, we have a vital choice to make. We can either live in seclusion, like Howard Hughes in his later years, cowering in paranoid fear of everything from germs to fatal accidents, or we can determine to live each moment we are given to the fullest and die with no regrets.

Yet it is only after deciding to live life to its fullest that we have the most difficult choices to make. It is then that we must come to grips with what brings true and lasting happiness and fulfillment to life.

If you were given only one week to live, what would you do? Would you live out your final days in a wild, uninhibited bacchanalia of sensual pleasures? Many would. Would you sell all that you had accumulated and spend your last week donating to every worthy cause you could think of? That would be more noble. Would you feverishly attend to every detail of settling your estate so your loved ones would be provided for after your death? That would demonstrate a high degree of responsibility and integrity. Would you spend every moment possible with your family and closest friends? That would probably give your final hours the greatest comfort. Or would you do nothing differently than you had done the pre-

vious week, or the week before that? That would indicate that your lifestyle has produced *heijōshin*!

This brings us to another paradox: if you have achieved *heijōshin*, you will live every day as if it were your last. But just because you live every day as if it were your last does not mean you have attained *heijōshin*. It is not simply "living like there's no tomorrow" that demonstrates *heijōshin*, but *how* you live your last day that is the barometer of your character. It is the quality and purpose of your life that gives it value.

How should I live my life to have *heijōshin*?

The highest principle of *heijōshin* is to develop your mind (the combination of intellect, emotions, and character) to such an elevated state that you are unaffected by your environment. This is what Musashi was trying to impress upon Jōtarō by admonishing him to train himself to be like Mt. Fuji. It means not allowing circumstances to control your emotions, nor emotions to confuse your judgment.

If your happiness and security are based primarily upon your financial status, then you will only be comfortable when things are going well. If you lose your job and begin to have difficulty paying your bills, soon you will find yourself constantly under stress, doubting your own abilities and value, and angered by the loss of the material freedom you once had. In the end, you will likely find yourself taking a job that is not right for you, just to regain your self-esteem and recover your lost financial status. This is an example of your circumstances controlling your emotions, and your emotions in turn confusing your judgment.

If your contentment is derived from knowing the type of person that you are inside, then you will more readily understand that life has its ups and downs. You will realize that the sun rises upon the evil and the good and the rain falls upon the righteous and the unrighteous alike. Everyone experiences an occasional windfall, and no one is exempt from times of hardship, so it is foolish to allow these circumstances to dictate your emotions. What is more, the rich and famous are often the unhappiest people in the world, while the so-called "lowly," like Mother Teresa, enjoy a rich and fulfilling life. Once you understand that it is what you *are*,

not what you *have*, that is important, you are able to rise above your circumstances.

The second key tenet of *heijōshin* is to understand that you are part of your environment, that what you are and what you do has an effect on other people. Even your emotions affect others. If you are discouraged, you will drop a cloud of gloom on the people with whom you come in contact. If you are joyful, just the sight of you will gladden them. If you behave rudely, you will anger people or hurt their feelings. If you are pleasant and respectful, you will brighten their day. People who look up to you will follow your example, whether it is good or bad.

This presents another of *heijōshin*'s paradoxes: How can we be unaffected by our environment when we are *part* of our environment?

Obviously, our environment will affect us to some degree. The state of the economy will affect us, our health will affect us, the actions of friends and loved ones will affect us. *Heijōshin* is not a condition in which we insulate ourselves from our surroundings, nor deny that our problems exist, nor deaden our minds and senses to our feelings. *Heijōshin* is not a means of escape, like drugs, which allows you to ignore or be unaware of your emotions. Quite the opposite, to possess *heijōshin* demands that you be deeply in touch with your emotions. It is perfectly natural to feel anger, joy, disappointment, love, and the full range of emotions. *Heijōshin*, however, allows us not to be controlled by these emotions so that our actions are not determined by a fleeting impulse, but are the product of a consistent, balanced, and focused mind.

How can I experience my emotions, yet not let them affect my actions?

The answer comes from developing two essential character traits: understanding and compassion.

First, you must understand yourself, understand why you feel the way you do, why certain events or situations evoke certain emotions in you. Then you must have compassion for yourself. Accept yourself for what you are, and why you are what you are. You cannot change who you are now. You have already become that person. You can only change who you

will be in the future. If you condemn yourself for your faults and failures, it is only a waste of your emotional energy and destructive to your self-esteem. But, if you can compassionately accept yourself as you are now, then you have a positive starting point from which to begin developing into the person you want to become.

Second, you must have the same understanding and compassion for others. Once you have thoroughly understood yourself, you can appreciate that other people have become who they are for a reason. There have been influences and circumstances that have shaped them into the people they have become. By compassionately accepting others with both their strengths and weaknesses, you will be able to distinguish between your feelings toward the person and your feelings about their behavior. This separation is vital to human relationships.

If someone behaves rudely, for example, I can either become offended by the *person* or by the person's *behavior*. If I become offended by the person, my natural reaction will be to avoid that offensive person. If, instead, I look beyond the person and see the behavior as offensive, then my natural reaction will be to try to understand what caused it, because I am now viewing the situation as an offensive action committed by an acceptable person. Rather than shunning the person, I will try to communicate with him or her, and my reaction will be motivated by concern rather than anger or resentment.

Westerners reflect an understanding of this aspect of *heijōshin* in this commonly quoted prayer:

> God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference.

When should I use *heijōshin*?

Heijōshin is not something you turn on and off like a politician's smile. Once *heijōshin* is rooted in you, it is with you at all times everywhere you go, from the time you wake up to the time you go to bed—even while you are sleeping! It becomes your natural state of mind, not something you summon only when you "need" it.

What are the benefits of *heijōshin*?

By developing a constant, peaceful state of mind, you, as an individual, will lead a happier, more serene life, liberated from the emotional roller coaster of forces beyond your control. But the benefits of *heijōshin* cannot remain exclusively personal. By its nature, *heijōshin* cannot exist in a vacuum, so its benefits will spread from you to society as a whole.

Society is simply a collection of individuals. Social ills, like crime and drug abuse, are merely the reflection of the combined failings of the individuals who comprise society. Laws cannot reform society and cure its ills, they can only punish violators. Society is like our collective shadow. If the shadow is bent and twisted, no amount of effort can straighten it. Only by straightening ourselves does our shadow also straighten, and then it does so effortlessly and automatically. So it is that reform must start with individuals and spread through society. It is a grassroots process in which each of us is either part of the disease or part of the cure.

If our behavior is controlled by our circumstances and emotions, rather than by our strength of character and ideals, then we are part of the disease. If, instead, our *heijōshin* lifts us above our circumstances and helps us live with greater purpose and meaning, our example will inspire others to become part of the cure.

Thus, the ultimate objective of *heijōshin* is the same as the ultimate objective of martial arts: to help each individual reach his or her full potential, and thereby improve society as a whole.

SHŪGYŌ NO HAJIME

The Journey's Beginning

Having determined to set out on this journey of self-discovery and character perfection through martial arts training, you need to know where to start. As good as any book or video may be, you cannot learn martial arts from it alone. Martial arts instruction is personal. It is nothing like learning spelling or arithmetic in school.

True martial arts instruction—the development, maturing, and shaping of a good *budōka* (martial artist)—is not a process; it is a relationship. For that reason, it requires a good instructor and a good *dōjō*. The depth of understanding of both the physical and philosophical aspects of *iaijutsu* can only be passed on through a mentoring relationship. This is why the Japanese place such importance—bordering on reverence—on the close relationship between a *seito* (student) and *sensei* (teacher), and in the relationship between *sempai* (senior students) and *kōhai* (junior students).

A *sensei* is more than a martial arts instructor, he or she is the model of technical and philosophical excellence to which students aspire. The *sempai*, or senior student, is a partner in the training process who acts like a nurturing older brother or sister, guiding and encouraging the student on the often difficult road toward his or her objectives and ideals.

Dōjō literally means "place of the way." It is not just a building in which to practice martial arts; it is a laboratory in which to study, experiment, and refine a complete and fulfilling way of life. You should select your *dōjō* with the utmost care, as though your life, or at least the quality of your life, depended on it.

The first step, therefore, in reaching your full potential is to find a good *sensei* teaching in a good *dōjō*. Remember that a good player is not always a good coach, so you must look not only at the instructor's technical expertise, but at his ability to lead, instruct, and inspire his students. Some good measures of these abilities are the degree of respect shown by his students, whether the senior students show a nurturing attitude toward their juniors, and whether the students are able to acquire the skills and—more importantly—the attitudes the instructor is trying to impart.

The only way to do this is to visit those *dōjō* in your area that have the

highest reputation among respected *budōka*. Visit each one in which you are interested several times to observe classes and discuss your training goals with the instructor. You should not only determine if the instructor's teaching style is suited to your personality and the way you learn best, but pay particular attention to the *sensei*'s attitude and demeanor. Does the *sensei* exhibit the highest ideals of martial arts in his or her conduct? Does he or she lose interest in you if you don't join the *dōjō* right away? Does he or she show more concern for you as a potential student, or in your ability to pay for the lessons? The "bottom-line" question to ask yourself is: "Is this *sensei* the kind of role model I want to emulate?"

Once you have selected a *dōjō*, it is important for you to seek a close relationship with your *sensei*. After all, *iaijutsu* training is training for everyday life, so in order for it to take root, your training must be part of your everyday life and your daily life must be part of your training. The Japanese have a saying, *Shi-tei fu ni* (Master and disciple are not two), meaning that your *sensei* should be like a wise, patient parent to you. Seek the counsel of your *sensei* concerning the opportunities, issues, and problems you are facing, so that he or she can show you how to apply sound martial arts principles to them.

Lastly, train seriously. Use your imagination to "feel" your opponent and face death through your training. As you learn to vividly face death while you practice *iaijutsu*, your eyes will be opened to what life is really about!

IKA NI SHINŪ KA

How to Die Well

Historically, an extremely significant part of a *samurai*'s training involved learning to die well. As we have emphasized repeatedly, facing death—either vicariously in the *dōjō* or literally on the battlefield—was a daily rou-

tine for the *samurai*. Part of a *samurai*'s training included instruction in the proprieties of *seppuku* (ritualistic suicide), accomplished by slitting open his own abdomen. A *samurai* was also trained and prepared to act as *kaishaku*, or assistant, in the event one of his peers was called upon to commit *seppuku*, and was well-versed in both the technique and etiquette of this crucial role. Even a woman of *samurai* rank was prepared to perform ritual suicide, albeit by a more genteel method, by slitting her throat.

One of the hallmarks of a *samurai* was his avowed purpose: *Shinu kikai o motomo* (Looking for the opportunity to die). In the West, we often seem to interpret this as an exaggerated sense of fatalism among the *samurai*, a view which reduces them to little more than half-crazed warriors throwing themselves wantonly into battle as if their lives were worthless.

While applying the principle of *shinu kikai o motomo* did free the *samurai* to face his enemy with fearless disregard for his own life, it was not for the reason suggested by this shallow interpretation. Instead, the *samurai* held his life to be of great value. It was therefore to be lost—or even risked—only if the cause was worthy of such a noble and extreme sacrifice!

Thus, in searching for the opportunity to die, the *samurai* really sought the reason to *live*. As modern *samurai*, we should do no less. Facing death in our training helps us to focus on those things that are truly important to our lives, such as family, personal relationships, strength of character, and so forth. In this way, *shinu kikai o motomo* leads us to decide what is really worth living for.

When we begin to focus our thoughts, ideals, and desires in this manner, most of the complexities, gray areas, and dilemmas of life are removed from our path. We no longer allow the trivialities and distractions which so complicate most people's lives to be a factor in ours.

By becoming complete martial artists—people who understand *budō no arikata* and *shūgyō no mokuteki*, who possess *heijōshin* and have determined their *shinu kikai*—we will know what truly victorious living is. We will live a life worth living, a life with purpose and meaning, filled with rich, intimate relationships. And when we reach the end of our appointed days, we will be able to look back on our lives without regrets.

This is the true purpose of *iaijutsu* training!

武士の目

Chapter 3

Bushi no Me

Eyes of a Samurai

A *samurai* does not see things in an ordinary way. He has trained his mind and spirit to process the impulses from his optic nerves in a highly refined manner.

Just as in Western culture, *samurai* concepts of "eye" and "sight" include both physical vision (to see an object) and mental insight (to "see" someone's point of view). In fact, to the *samurai*, there is probably less distinction between these two concepts than in the West. For most Westerners vision seldom rises above the first or second level, but the *samurai* recognizes five distinct levels of eyesight and tries to "see" at the highest of these levels in a way which combines physical sight with deep insight.

NIKUGEN

Naked Eye

Nikugen is no more than the plain image received on the retina, devoid of any mental or emotional process. Obviously, it is the lowest of the five levels of vision, and it has three major limitations.

First *nikugen* is completely superficial. A person using *nikugen* sees nothing beyond the existence of the objects within his or her field of vision. *Nikugen* does not involve any deeper comprehension of these objects, such as how they came to be where they are, how they might interact, or how they might affect the observer or others.

Secondly *nikugen* is limited by the observer's point of view. Someone using *nikugen* can see only that side of things which is facing his direction. In this sense, *nikugen* is almost two-dimensional. Staring at a circular object,

a person using *nikugen* would not know if he sees a true circle, the bottom of a cone, the bottom of a cylinder, or the visible outline of a sphere.

Thirdly *nikugen* is easily obstructed. By simply placing something in front of the observer's eyes, he would be rendered effectively sightless.

These qualities not only apply to physical sight, but also to the "insight" sense of *nikugen*. A person trying to "see" a problem using only *nikugen* can see only its superficial aspects. He also sees the problem only from his own point of view, and his vision is easily clouded by his circumstances, preconceived ideas, and emotions. For example, using only *nikugen*, a person with no money in his pockets would see himself as penniless. If he wanted a sandwich, then he would view purchasing the sandwich as a hopeless impossibility.

With this two-dimensional view, the hungry man is "blind" to other possibilities, such as bartering work for the sandwich, selling another possession to raise money for the sandwich, or seeking food from another source.

TENGEN

Neutral Perspective

The next developmental step in vision is *tengen*, translated literally as "heavenly eye." This type of sight is described as heavenly not in an angelic sense, but in terms of the observer's point of view.

With *tengen*, the observer is no longer bound by his own point of view, but has a neutral perspective in which he is able to see objects or a problem as if looking down on them from a great height. Quite literally, *tengen* is being able to "see the forest for the trees." In this way, not only can one clearly see the true nature and shape of objects, as in the first example of *nikugen*, but also all aspects of a problem from a detached and broad perspective. Furthermore, with the less self-centered perspective of *tengen*, the observer's viewpoint is not as susceptible to the distortions of his own preconceived ideas, emotional reactions, or living conditions as he would be with *nikugen*. *Tengen* cannot be easily obstructed, because clear sight is not dependent upon the observer's point of view.

Using the previous examples, a person with *tengen* is more likely to per-

ceive what the unseen surfaces of the circular object are. By applying knowledge and experience, his mind will be able to conclude whether what is seen is just a circle, or an outline of a sphere, or the bottom of a cylinder or cone. Similarly, someone with *tengen* will have the ability to "see" more sides to a problem. Rather than narrowly perceiving a lack of money for a sandwich, a person with *tengen* would view the situation in the broader sense of a need for food, which offers more options for a solution.

However, even with this elevated perspective, the observer's emotions, preconceptions, and life circumstances can interfere to some degree with true understanding, and her view is still limited to what the eyes can see.

EGEN

Interpretive Sight

Egen (thinking sight) is a higher level, at which the image received by the brain is enhanced by an understanding of the implications of the things being observed. It is important, however, not to confuse *egen* with analytical thought. *Egen* is not the product of thinking about what you see; it is an automatic, subconscious process in which the eye and mind work together to interpret the images received by the brain, thus producing a deeper level of vision than mere physical eyesight.

To use a simple example that many of us may have experienced, a person observing two cars approaching a blind intersection at the same time may see an accident about to happen. Most people would not have to stop and think to realize this. By experience, knowing that neither driver can see the other's oncoming vehicle, we automatically and subconsciously know they are about to collide. With only *nikugen* or *tengen*, however, we would only see two cars moving independently of each other, much as a child who had never witnessed an accident might perceive them.

Unfortunately, while most mature adults have *egen* with respect to common physical events, we lack it in other ways. With true *egen*, we would recognize when a clash of personalities or wills was about to occur just as readily as an accident about to happen. We would see an event not just in its physical form, but in the context of the forces which brought it about and the effects it will later have on other events.

Thus, the main benefit of *egen* is that the observer naturally and subconsciously perceives and understands the cause-and-effect relationship of the things he witnesses. *Egen* is not limited by the observer's point of view; his sight is unclouded by emotions, preconceptions, or life condition. However, *egen* remains impaired in a crucial way.

SHINGEN/HŌGEN

Compassionate Eye

For all its benefits, *egen* is still incomplete. Although the observer receives a complete, unobstructed, and untainted view of situations and their causes and effects—even the reasons and motives underlying peoples' actions—this vision is detached and dispassionate.

The next level of vision, *shingen*, adds the most vital ingredient of all: compassion. Compassion is the spark that motivates the *samurai* to take the correct action in a situation. He sees an event not merely from his own perspective and how it may effect him, but how the event will shape the lives of everyone involved. Furthermore, he sees it with understanding and compassion for all those affected, so that his action will be not what is best for him, but what will be the best for society as a whole.

The *samurai* does not view the feelings, actions, or desires of others as "right" or "wrong." Therefore, his judgment is not clouded by a need to prove himself right. Nor does the *samurai* have to overcome the natural hesitancy of another person to admit that he is wrong. Instead, the *samurai* is only concerned with what has greater *value*. Thus, in a disagreement, the *samurai* sees the views of others only as alternatives, and she is able to use *shingen* to see which of these alternatives has the most value to society, whether it is her own preference or not. With this approach, it is far easier to persuade others to accept the best choice, as well.

A *samurai's* evaluation also takes into account the immutable laws of nature. She understands the principles of cause and effect, and that even wrongful actions are motivated by these cause-and-effect forces. Because of this, *shingen* is often also referred to as *hōgen*. *Hōgen* translates literally as "law sight," but it does not refer to the laws of mankind. Instead, its nuance might be best understood as "universal perspective" in the sense of

having equal compassion for each person in a world operating under a natural order which never changes, but in which you can choose to intervene. It is from this neutral, compassionate point of view that the *samurai* tries to observe the world and take the most beneficial action.

Thus, as shown in the table below, a *samurai* is trained to "see from the heart." Training in the life-or-death art of *iaijutsu* develops a deep, abiding compassion for people, and the experiences of life instill an understanding of the unchanging forces which shape both people and events. As her training and experience continue, her sight evolves through stages from *nikugen* to *shingen*.

Nikugen	→ *Tengen*	→ *Egen*	→ *Shingen/Hōgen*
←	Deeper Insight		→
←	Greater Compassion		→
←	More Natural		→

The easiest way to compare the differences—and the effects of those differences—among *nikugen, tengen, egen,* and *shingen* may be an example from everyday life:

You are running late for a very important business meeting, and when you get onto the freeway, the traffic is heavily congested and moving at a crawl.

With *nikugen*, all you can see is that you are going to be extremely late for the meeting and make a terrible impression. As a result, you will probably speed frantically through the traffic, zigging and zagging from lane to lane, trying to gain a few precious minutes.

A person with *tengen*, however, can see that his wild driving might earn him a traffic ticket. He might slow down a little, but more likely he will just be more careful to watch in the mirror for police cars, since he still wants to save as much time as possible getting to the meeting.

The person with *egen*, on the other hand, does not allow his desire to make a good impression cloud his judgment. He realizes that driving recklessly not only could earn him a traffic ticket, but also endangers himself and other people on the road—people who have just as much right to safe

use of the highway as he does. Furthermore, he may even realize that his business associates may also be held up by the same traffic jam, so he will understand the futility of speeding to make up lost time.

The *samurai* is already at the meeting, waiting for the others to arrive. With the benefit of *hōgen*, he understood that the freeways would be packed at rush hour, so he got up earlier than usual to be sure traffic would not be a problem. In this way, if traffic was terrible he would be on time; if traffic was not congested, he would arrive early. He also understood that by being early, his associates would feel obligated to "make it up" to him, so he would gain a psychological advantage at the meeting, as well!

A true-life historical example of *shingen* comes from the exploits of one of Japan's greatest military leaders, Takeda Shingen, whose life exemplifies many of the training goals of *iaijutsu*.

In Takeda's time, there was a brilliant tactician and warrior named Yamamoto Kansuke. Yamamoto's prowess was not apparent to the naked eye (*nikugen*), but his ugliness most certainly was. His battlefield experience left him with only one eye, a maimed leg, and a disfigured finger, in addition to his generally unattractive appearance. One of Takeda's rivals, Imagawa Yoshimoto, took one look at Yamamoto and turned him down flatly for a command position.

Takeda, possessed of *shingen*, quickly saw past the scarred and unpleasant surface appearance of Yamamoto to his strength of character and tactical knowledge. Takeda at once selected Yamamoto as one of his twenty-four *taishō* (generals). Not only did Yamamoto produce numerous victories for Takeda, but as a man who overcame severe physical handicaps, especially for his day, he was a tremendous inspiration to Takeda's other commanders, and thus doubly valuable.

BUSHI NO ME NO RENSHŪ

Training to Develop Eye of a Samurai

Understanding *bushi no me* is a good start, but developing *bushi no me* is quite another task altogether. This is especially true when you are trying to develop the eye of a *samurai* in both its literal and figurative sense.

You should also be aware that *iaijutsu* training does not really change the core of your personality. The essence of your personality was formed by the time you were five years old. Instead, *iaijutsu* training helps you develop your strengths to greater levels and suppress your weaknesses. Since "the eyes are the mirror of the soul," developing *bushi no me* allows you to see yourself clearly so you can make the greatest improvement possible in your attitude and character.

To develop *bushi no me* in the literal sense, gradually developing eyesight that is all-encompassing and deeply understanding, requires concentrated effort in the *dōjō*. Your objective should be to both broaden and deepen your sight.

Broadening your sight means enhancing your use of peripheral vision and combining sight with your other senses to provide awareness of things and events your eyes alone cannot see. Deepening your sight involves developing an understanding that gets far below the surface. A simplified example is being able to see past the frown on a person's face (surface) to the emotion or problem that put that frown there. Of course, *shingen* is far more subtle, deep, and complex than this simplistic example, but it serves to convey the concept.

Whether you are training literally or figuratively to develop *bushi no me*, the first step, obviously, is to open your eyes. Of course, this means more than simply looking around—that would merely be *nikugen*. It means to practice being aware, to observe the "big picture" without missing the details, to be cognizant of the causes and effects of the events you witness, to understand other people's point of view and why they hold to it, to notice the subtleties of people's behavior, and to refrain from being judgmental towards them. It equally implies making an effort to "stop and smell the roses," to realize that there are always positive influences in your life—even when you are beset by difficulties—and to give at least equal attention to these.

To train in the figurative sense of *bushi no me* and reach a point where you are naturally using *shingen* most of the time is a difficult, lifelong process. So it helps to find a good starting point. We recommend *Shin•Ku•I* as a means to begin developing *bushi no me*.

SHIN • KU • I

Body • Mouth • Mind

Like most training concepts in *iaijutsu*, *Shin•Ku•I* will seem a bit paradoxical at first. Literally "Body•Mouth•Mind," *Shin•Ku•I* refers to action, speech, and thought. This order is stated in the reverse of causation, but is the proper order of training.

It is self-evident that the mind controls speech and action (with the exception, perhaps, of reflexive reaction), yet martial artists through the centuries have found that in training it is more effective to begin at the surface and work back toward the source.

This approach may also recognize the fact that people readily notice our actions and immediately judge us by them. People also listen to our words, but they usually weigh them against our actions to test for hypocrisy. Our thoughts, of course, remain forever hidden from the public. It doesn't matter to others what our thoughts or intentions are if our actions are harmful or disrespectful. Similarly, if we speak negatively, our good thoughts and intentions will have no impact.

Therefore, when we train to improve our character, we begin with the outward manifestation: our behavior. We act with respect toward ourselves and others. We train with discipline and diligence. As we train with this focus, our actions begin to show in the way we speak. The more we consciously act in a respectful and disciplined manner, the more our language becomes respectful and disciplined, as well. Thus, by learning to exercise control over our actions, we also develop control over our speech.

The ongoing conscious effort to control our actions and speech eventually enables us to exert increasing control over our minds. Once we have developed thoughts and emotions reflective of our improving character, then our words and deeds will continue to demonstrate our increasing maturity. In this way, the process naturally reverses, so that at higher levels of training, the mental discipline brings about change in our actions and speech.

Shin•Ku•I is a vital part of training for a *samurai*, for whom the slightest misstatement or misdeed could result in instantaneous lethal combat. It is therefore essential that a *samurai* exercise discretion in both words

and actions. This can only be accomplished if the mind is thoroughly in control.

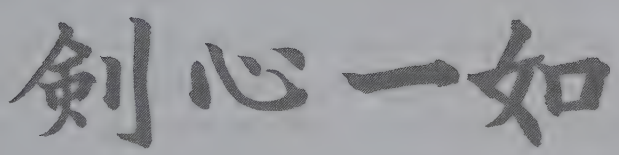
Even in modern Western cultures, *Shin•Ku•I* remains a valuable asset. Read the biographies of highly successful, inspirational people and you will uniformly find that their lives are guided by principles (the mind), which find their way into every word they utter and every action they take. Those aspiring to any measure of greatness in life must follow this model, and *Shin•Ku•I* is an effective means of developing such a lifestyle.

KEN SHIN ICHI NYO

Body and Mind as One

The next stage of training to achieve *bushi no me* is known as *ken shin ichi nyo* (body and mind as one). In *Shin•Ku•I*, we train our bodies to respond to our minds, so that our actions are the result of our principles and character. *Ken shin ichi nyo* takes that process a step further and makes our mind and body act in unison.

Iaijutsu is again an excellent training method to accomplish this unity of body and mind. *Ken shin ichi nyo* is written like this:



This actually has the literal meaning "*sword* and mind as one," which is a training objective of *samurai* swordsmanship. Rather than the body swinging the sword—wielding it as a tool—which is a beginner's level, the master's sword is merely an extension of his own body. As we train toward mastery, we eventually reach a stage at which, rather than the mind instructing our arm to swing the sword, our mind merely instructs the sword to move. In actuality, our mental commands do not bypass our arm; instead, what we have accomplished is to train our mind and body to act as a single unit which in turn controls the sword.

In Japanese poetry, the word *ken* (sword) often serves as an allusion to the body. Perhaps this has come about because diligent *iaijutsu* training

causes the literal "sword and mind as one" translation of *ken shin ichi nyo* to steadily evolve into the more profound "body and mind as one."

An interesting paradox to consider while you are progressing through *Shin•Ku•I* to achieve *ken shin ichi nyo* is the Japanese saying, *Kokoro no shito wa narutomo, kokoro o shito sezare:* Your mind can't be your master; you must master your mind.

How are we to understand this axiom when we are training so that our mind controls our speech and action (*Shin•Ku•I*), and our body and mind act as one (*ken shin ichi nyo*)?

The answer is found in the fact that the mind is a complex mechanism, in which the intellect, emotions, character, ideals, and motivations continually interact to produce speech and actions. Each of these areas of the mind has both strengths and weaknesses. And each of these elements is also constantly evolving, influenced not only by external forces and circumstances, but by the development of the other parts of the mind as well.

Not only are these elements continuously struggling to control your conduct, but you are relentlessly besieged by outside influences trying to shape your behavior. The most obvious of these are advertising, peer pressure, laws, social forces, financial pressures, and a variety of temptations. As if these were not enough, your own character adds stresses to this complex equation. For example, you might have a tendency toward laziness that is in constant conflict with your desire to succeed, or perhaps it is a sweet tooth at odds with your plans to go on a diet right after you finish the next doughnut . . . or the one after that. Each of our internal conflicts is different, both in nature and severity, but they plague every human being.

The point made by the proverb is that these forces will control your mind, unless you make a conscious determination that they will not. Your mind will either react to the inundation of these influences, or you must instead take proactive steps to ensure that it will stand against the combined effect of this bombardment.

It is not enough merely to ensure that your mind is in control of your speech and actions, and that your mind and body act as one; you must also ensure that it is you—your character and principles and highest aspirations—who is in charge of that mind!

HEN DOKU I YAKU

Change Poison to Medicine

Another way in which *bushi no me* helps improve your quality of life is found in the saying, *Hen doku i yaku:* Change poison to medicine. This is a deeper approach to adversity than simply learning to recognize that "every cloud has a silver lining." It is more akin to the notion that "when life hands you a lemon, make lemonade."

Many of the medicines we use to cure illnesses are quite toxic. They work by killing bacteria or viruses in a small enough dosage that they do not seriously harm us. However, taken in greater quantity, many medicines can be lethal to humans. Recognizing this, the *samurai* have long known that, like certain poisons, adversities can often have a medicinal effect if taken in the right dosage. Once again, the proverb mandates a proactive approach by the *samurai*: not merely looking for the good that might come out of a negative event, but *creating* a positive outcome.

The comparison of difficulties to "medicine" is also quite deliberate in other respects. Most of the time we do not like the taste of medicine, but we take it to cure a malady. Likewise, we seldom enjoy adversity, but we can use it as a means for self-improvement. With insight and effort, we can use life's setbacks to develop such character traits as patience, endurance, determination, winning spirit, moral stamina, and perseverance.

Medicines are used to cure disease. Often, if we reflect honestly on the causes of our adversities, we find that they either resulted from, or were worsened by, our own shortcomings. By making a forthright self-analysis when we encounter a challenge, we can identify the area of our personality or character that requires a dose of "medicine."

Medicines are also frequently preventive. This is also the case with *hen doku i yaku*. If we take our "medicine" every time the symptoms appear, we will find fewer and fewer instances in which it is needed. By maturing in our character and improving our *bushi no me*, the frequency and severity of our difficulties will be steadily reduced.

Takeda Shingen knew how to apply the lesson of *hen doku i yaku* in dire circumstances. Itagaki, one of his generals, plunged his troops into a battle that Takeda's other twenty-three generals had strongly advised against

and was soundly defeated. Upon Itagaki's return, he was harshly criticized by his peers, and he fully expected Takeda to strip him of all rank and honor.

Takeda could have ordered Itagaki to commit suicide and made an example of him to impress on his other generals the importance of taking sound advice and never losing. Instead, Takeda wisely chose *hen doku i yaku*. Instead of chastising Itagaki, he praised him as a brilliant commander for having minimized his losses under such a crushing defeat and suggested that he doubted any other general could have done so well under the same circumstances.

Instead of being disheartened by his overwhelming defeat, Itagaki's attitude was strengthened with a renewed determination to merit Takeda's praise and faith in him. As a result, he went on to lead several victorious campaigns for Takeda.

YUDAN NASHI

Never Off-Guard

The last—and broadest—risk to *bushi no me* is *yudan*, being "off-guard." The fighting skills of a *samurai* were so great that the best chance to defeat him was to catch him off-guard. A famous story about Miyamoto Musashi illustrates this point well.

According to the legend, one of Musashi's enemies brought a force of several men to his bathhouse while he was bathing. They heavily stoked the fire under his bathwater, lit the bathhouse on fire, then waited in ambush outside the tiny shed. They intended to leave him only three choices: to be boiled alive, be burned to death, or run out defenseless to be slaughtered by their superior forces. With the benefit of *bushi no me*, Musashi had anticipated the possibility of such an attack, and brought his swords with him to the bathhouse. As the treachery unfolded, Musashi broke out through a weakened side of the burning shed and killed the enemies who were lying in wait for him.

Even when relaxing in his bath, when a sense of fair play would place him off-limits to attack by any but the lowest coward, Musashi never permitted *yudan*. His mind and senses were always alert to danger, almost in the fashion of an animal subject to predation. By virtue of *hōgen*, his eyes were continually evaluating the cause and effect of all they surveyed, so that he could never be caught unaware.

An example of training to avoid *yudan* is the instruction given by the sword-master Ittō Ittōsai to one of his disciples. Rather than teach his young student the fine points of swordsmanship, as one might expect, Ittō instead spent the first several years of the youth's training merely slapping him on the head at every opportunity. This was, of course, extremely annoying to the young trainee, but month after month—as his perception improved—he received fewer and fewer slaps. As the years passed, the great master had to become increasingly treacherous and inventive to catch his disciple off-guard, until at last he was no longer able to do so. After this, with only minimal instruction in the handling of a sword, the disciple quickly developed into a master swordsman since no opponent was able to find an opening for attack.

If you have *hōgen* and remain constantly vigilant, you will never be caught off-guard. Nothing in life will catch you by surprise. This is not to say that your life will never be beset by adversity or trials, but that you will be prepared to meet these challenges when they arise. Thus, true *bushi no me*—the combination of *hōgen* with the complete avoidance of *yudan*—is essential to achieving *heijōshin*.

You should be aware that the most vulnerable time for *yudan* to overtake you is during your happiest times. In ancient days, one of the best times to attack was when the enemy was celebrating a victory. When you are happy, you tend to relax and grow serenely oblivious to the events transpiring around you. It is also a state in which it seems pressing problems can be temporarily ignored. Typically, when you are unusually happy, your usual inhibitions are lessened, and it is easier for various pitfalls and temptations to slip unnoticed into your life.

On his deathbed, Takeda Shingen counseled his son to wait three years before leading an attack against any of his enemies. This period of engaging only in defensive battles would allow time for Takeda's army to adjust to his son's leadership, and for Takeda's son to mature and gain experience and credibility as their commander. Ignoring his father's advice, immediately after the mourning period for his father's death had ended, Takeda's son drove his forces into a decisive battle, relying on the legacy of his father's reputation and countless past victories to motivate the troops and intimidate the opponents. Instead, because of the *yudan* of his overconfidence, Takeda's army was crushed. In a single battle, his son lost everything Takeda had spent a lifetime building.

As we have seen throughout this chapter, the mind is the focal point of proper training. The mind working in concert with the eyes is *shingen* or *hōgen*. The mind controlling words and actions is *Shin • Ku • I*. The mind working in inseparable harmony with the body is *ken shin ichi nyo*. The mind never dropping its guard is *yudan nashi*. The constant factor throughout these concepts—the key which makes them all possible—is the *mind*.

The mind is the key to all of life, so the conclusion to be drawn is: Make up your mind!

All other training will be pointless unless you do. You will never achieve *shingen*, you will never progress through *Shin • Ku • I*, you will never find *heijōshin* without first having made up your mind. Once you have set your mind to something, and you believe in yourself strongly enough, nothing can prevent you from accomplishing that goal.

But this is not simply saying to yourself that you will do it. Nor is it merely writing some goals on paper. It means making an unshakable, steadfast determination that nothing short of death will stop you! This is the type of resolve that leads you to train even when you don't feel up to it—when you are bruised and blistered and aching and bone-weary, and you can't bear the thought of going back to the *dōjō*—you go anyway because that is what you made up your mind to do.

The Japanese call this kind of strong spirit *shinnen*. But *shinnen* is more than simply iron-willed determination or merely believing strongly in yourself. It implies a belief that you are part of something greater than just yourself, that you have a moral right and responsibility to do what you are doing. The moral imperative of *shinnen* was a powerful stimulus for self-discipline and noble deeds to the *samurai*, and it is an equally motivating force in our times for those whose character and conduct is righteous.

When you begin to apply this same determination outside the *dōjō*, you find that once you set goals for your life—goals that are worth living and dying for—no power on earth can distract you from achieving them.

刀の名称

Chapter 4

Katana no Meishō

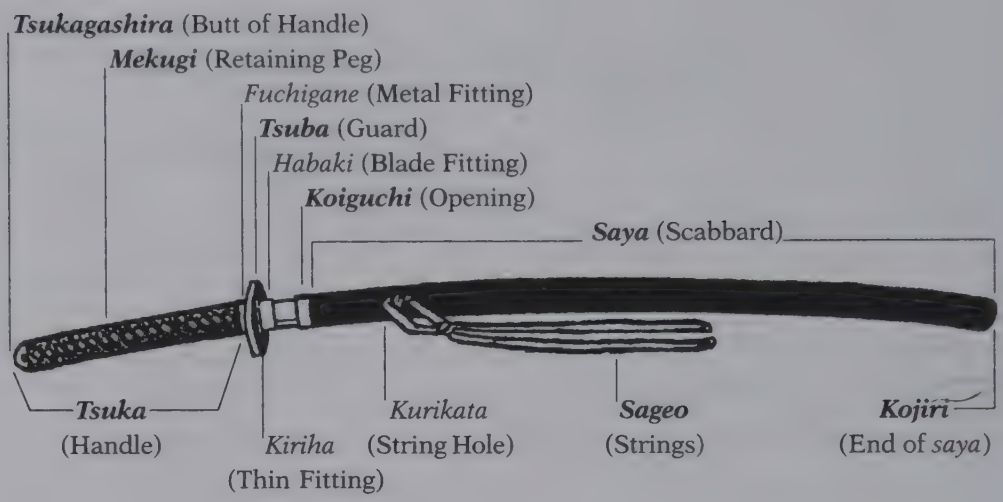
Sword Nomenclature

Throughout this book, as well as in any traditional *dōjō* you might attend, the various parts of the sword are referred to by their Japanese names. The following two illustrations identify the most commonly used parts of the sword. Eventually, with continued practice and reference, you will learn the Japanese names for all parts of the sword that are frequently used in *iaijutsu*. A table follows the illustrations below, giving the names of those parts of the sword that beginners should memorize as early as possible in their *iaijutsu* training.

The sword in its entirety is usually called a *katana*, which is a somewhat generic term. More specifically, the *katana* we generally practice with is a *daitō* (long sword), to distinguish it from the *wakizashi* or *shōtō*, the shorter companion-sword often worn by *samurai*. The unsharpened sword used for *iaijutsu* practice is called an *iaitō* (*iai* sword). You may also occasionally hear reference to *chūtō* (middle sword), which in modern times denotes a mid-length sword used by children for swordsmanship training. Another generic term for sword is *ken*. This term is most commonly found in such terms as *kendō* (the sport of swordsmanship), *kenjutsu* (the art of sword battle), or in such phrases as *ken shin ichi nyo*, discussed in Chapter 3.

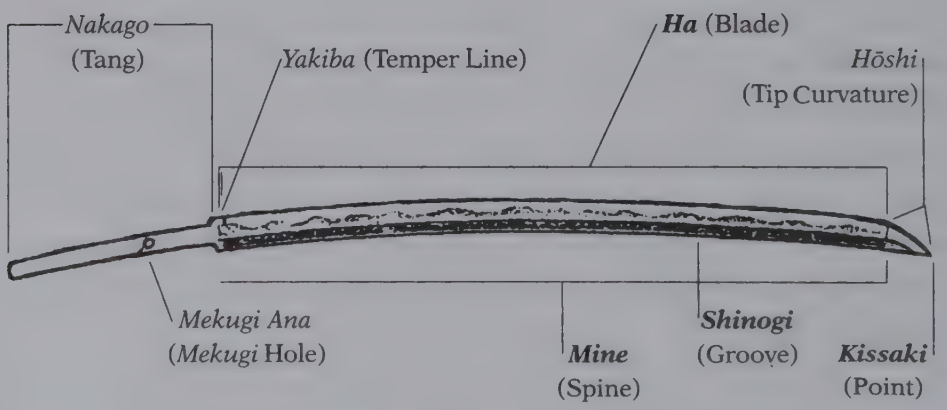
KOSHIRAE

Mountings



TŌSHIN

Bare Blade



MAJOR PARTS

The most important parts of the sword for the beginning student to remember are those shown in the table below:

Japanese Term	Pronunciation	English Term
1. *Tsuka*	Ts'oo-kah	Handle
2. *Tsukagashira*	Ts'oo-kah-gah-shee-rah	End of the Handle
3. *Mekugi*	Meh-koo-gee	Retaining Peg
4. *Tsuba*	Ts'oo-bah	Guard
5. *Saya*	Sah-yah	Scabbard
6. *Koiguchi*	Coy-goo-ch'ee	Mouth of the Saya
7. *Kojiri*	Koe-jee-ree	Butt of the Saya
8. *Sageo*	Sah-gay-oh	Saya Strings
9. *Ha* or *Shiraha*	Haw (She-rah-haw)	Blade
10. *Mine*	Mee-neh	Spine or Back of the Blade
11. *Kissaki*	Kees-sah-kee	Point
12. *Shinogi*	Shee-no-gee	Groove

These are the parts most frequently discussed throughout the instructional portions of this book, as well as the most often referred to during *dōjō* instruction.

修行の順序

Chapter 5

Shūgyō no Junjō

Progression of Training

As you train in *iaijutsu*, you will pass through several stages of development in your progression from beginner to expert to master of the art. You may also reach physical and emotional plateaus at which your progress may appear to slow or stop—or even decline. Understanding that such plateaus are a normal part of the training process will help you avoid allowing a setback or plateau to discourage you.

KETSUI O SURU

Make Up Your Mind

The first step in your journey is to make up your mind. You must decide to make your training a high priority in your life, not merely something you do for entertainment or a diversion whenever you lack something more interesting to do.

Martial arts practice, especially in a serious art like *iaijutsu*, is a lifestyle, not just an extracurricular activity. As you progress, the discipline and dedication of your training will set you apart. You will begin to approach all of life with a martial artist's outlook. Over time, your entire attitude and personality will evolve. But this kind of fundamental improvement of your character cannot occur without a strong determination to train, even when you don't feel like it—especially when you don't feel like it.

In Chapter 3, we explained extensively the importance of making up your mind and of having *shinnen*—an unwavering determination—as the foundation for all your endeavors. Applying this knowledge now is the first step in your *iaijutsu* training.

KIHON O MANABU

Emphasize the Basics

There is always a great temptation, particularly for beginners, to learn the flashy, fancy, or difficult techniques of any art. It is natural for you to feel this way, especially if you have a desire to excel at *iaijutsu* and truly master it. However, your primary emphasis must be on the fundamentals, which are outlined in Chapter 7.

It is true with any martial art that a practitioner who has truly mastered the basics will handily defeat one who has trained in advanced techniques after having only a cursory knowledge of the fundamentals. If you understand the nature of basic techniques, it is easy to see why this is universally true.

Basics are no more or less than the ideal technique as it would be performed under ideal circumstances. Fundamentals demonstrate the perfect method of maximizing power, balance, self-protection, and effectiveness of technique. It is only after you have mastered performing under such ideal conditions that you can learn how to best adapt basic techniques to less-than-ideal circumstances.

It is also a mistake to assume that basics are only for beginners. Emphasis on fundamentals must be a lifelong habit. Anyone who has studied the lives of the great martial arts masters has observed that, without exception, they have shared a continuing passion for improving their basics.

RIRON O SHIRU

Understand the Principles

As you study the fundamentals, it is not sufficient to merely master the body mechanics necessary to perform them with precision and power. To progress beyond the basics, you must understand the underlying principles which make them effective.

With such an understanding, you will then be able to apply the basics to intermediate and advanced techniques and make these techniques as effective and natural as your basics. Furthermore, with a deep understand-

ing of the principles which make techniques effective, you can readily apply *iaijutsu* techniques to a real situation.

KAISŪ O KASANERU

Develop through Repetition

The objective of *iaijutsu* is to make the techniques natural—to make the sword simply another appendage of your body. Nothing becomes this natural without practice, which is another reason for *kihon o manabu*: emphasizing the basics. You must be certain you are developing good habits in your training; that you are reinforcing correct technique, not errors or sloppiness, through your countless repetition.

It can truly be said that the only difference between a novice and an expert is the number of repetitions of technique. A master is simply a novice who has practiced the techniques literally millions of times! His depth of character and his knowledge of the art came in the same fashion: endless repetition. Repeated practice not only develops the physical skills of the art, but also develops the mental attributes needed for mastery. You simply will not be able to train frequently and regularly for a prolonged period without developing both the physical skills and the mental attitudes—patience, persistence, fighting spirit, *bushi no me*, compassion, and *heijōshin*—of a martial arts master.

TAIRYOKU NI ŌJITE OKONAU

Different Strengths, Different People

Different people have different strengths and weaknesses. People learn faster or slower than others, have more or less innate athletic ability, and are in different stages of physical condition. All these things must be taken into account, because they can significantly affect the pace at which one is able to learn new skills.

The only fair and true measure of progress is *your* progress. It is not fair—to yourself or anyone else—to compare yourself to others. Your body structure, learning ability, athletic prowess, age, maturity, and moti-

vation are all vastly different from anyone else's, and your comparative rate of progress in learning *iaijutsu* will likewise be different.

You must also keep in mind how deceptively simple *iaijutsu* appears. Even people with years of training in other martial arts find *iaijutsu* movements difficult to master because the body mechanics are so different. Paradoxically, while *iaijutsu* stresses the natural posture and movement of the body, it feels extremely *unnatural* for the first several months of training! It is important to begin your training with realistic expectations, so plan on training at least a year before feeling comfortable with the techniques.

In keeping with such realistic expectations, you should start your training slowly, concentrating on correct movement and easy, natural swinging of the sword, and gradually build up your speed and power. This not only prevents injuries from overtraining and overexertion, but allows your body to assimilate the correct sequence of muscle contractions and extensions before attempting to do them with power.

JISHIN NI TSUITE

Confidence

Just as there will be times during your training that you reach plateaus or encounter disappointments, there will also be times in which your performance really excels or you achieve significant triumphs. And, just as there is danger in allowing disappointment to cloud your perception of your progress, there is equal danger in becoming overconfident when your situation seems favorable.

Confidence is an important strength to possess. A *samurai* had to be confident, not only to face life-or-death battles, but to achieve *saya no naka ni kachi* (victory while still in the scabbard) in all areas of life. But, confidence must also be realistic, balanced, and tempered with humility.

Takeda Shingen, who was not only a great general but a great philosopher, firmly believed that the best fight was no fight, and very seldom provoked a conflict. However, between the years 1553 and 1564, one of his most tenacious adversaries, Uesugi Kenshin, engaged his army in no less than five major battles. Takeda's forces were always victorious and could

easily have crushed Uesugi's army on several occasions. But Takeda carefully engineered his victories so they appeared to come by only a narrow margin because he understood the danger of overconfidence.

In Takeda's view, the best victory was by a 60/40 margin—wide enough to allow for unexpected events, yet narrow enough to keep his troops aware of the possibility of defeat and therefore intensely focused. He felt that the closer to an absolute 100/0 victory he achieved, the more likely his warriors would become overconfident, leading to recklessness, lack of discipline, and *yudan*. For his first forty years, Takeda's goal in battle was to win, but as he matured as a commander, his perspective shifted to *not losing*, as we explained in detail in Chapter 2 (*budō no arikata*).

The same reasoning applies to overconfidence at the personal level. If we allow ourselves to become overconfident because of a few triumphs, we are likely to lose our strength of concentration and self-discipline and we will begin to decline rather than progress in our training.

JIGA NI TSUITE

Control Your Ego

It was consistent with Takeda Shingen's philosophy that he selected a wide variety of trees to grow in his garden. He had cherry trees so he could admire their blossoms in the spring, weeping willows to provide spreading shade in the heat of summer, maples to set his garden ablaze with color in the fall, and pines to add bright spots of greenery to the stark winter landscape.

He selected his twenty-four subordinate generals (*taishō*) in a similar manner. These men not only reported to him and controlled his troops in battle, but acted as his trusted advisors. Having risen to such positions of power and prestige, many men would surround themselves with snivelling "yes-men," but Takeda instead chose men of varied backgrounds and ideas, in order to get the very best and most creative advice possible. In addition to their having the courage to speak their minds frankly even if they felt he would not like to hear it, Takeda had five key criteria for selecting each of his generals: (1) they had to be good martial artists, (2) they had to possess deep compassion and understanding for people, (3) they

had to exhibit extreme *reigi* (politeness and self-discipline), (4) they had to evidence *heijōshin* in their behavior, and (5) they had to have a resolute sense of loyalty.

In order to receive the best possible advice from this diverse group of leaders, Takeda had to be willing to accept blunt criticism of his own plans and ideas, even of his goals and motives. He listened to their suggestions because of their wisdom and sincerity, not necessarily because they were his friends or agreed with him. Few of us are truly willing to subject ourselves to this sort of scrutiny, especially when our egos have been enlarged by holding a position of any consequence or power. But to achieve our highest potential, we must set our egotism aside and willingly listen to the voice of constructive criticism, whether it be from our *iaijutsu sensei* in the *dōjō* or our close family members and friends.

In fact, one of the best ways to make significant improvement in areas of personal character is to surround yourself with loving, compassionate friends or family members who are willing to examine your actions and hold you unflaggingly accountable for your personal growth. While this is often a painful ordeal, for most of us it is the only way we can build the resolve needed to tackle the really deep-rooted integrity issues in our lives.

Like Takeda Shingen, you must be extremely careful in your selection of the people who will hold you accountable. They do not all have to be martial artists, but they should all possess the compassion, discipline, *heijōshin*, and loyalty of Takeda's generals. And they must all love you enough to be willing to face you honestly and boldly, but with tenderness, and deal with your worst faults and failings, even though to do so will usually be as painful for them as it is for you.

SHIN • KI • RYOKU

Mind • Spirit • Technique

When we presented the concept of *Shin • Ku • I* in Chapter 3, we showed how the mind is the key to self-control. The first topic in this chapter, as well, was making up your mind. There can be no question that the mind is the pivotal aspect of all martial arts training—all human endeavor, in fact. Once again, *Shin • Ki • Ryoku* points to mental focus as the core of *iaijutsu* technique.

Shin • Ki • Ryoku is used to signify that mind, spirit, and technique should be inseparable. But it is an even more refined notion than the three simply working together in harmony; it is the concept of technique being the product of the mind and spirit working together. For an analogy, think of your left hand as your mind and your right hand as your spirit. When the two hands slap together, the resulting clap is technique.

Thus, a goal of your training should be to so completely unite your mind and spirit that your body's movements are the instinctive and natural response to their combined workings.

DAI • KYŌ • SOKU • KEI

Big • Strong • Fast • Light

Dai • Kyō • Soku • Kei (Big • Strong • Fast • Light) best describes the proper sequence of training emphasis in *iaijutsu*. The progression from one to the next—from "big" to "strong" to "fast" to "light"—must not be forced. Instead, it must be the natural evolution of your skills, passing successively through each stage as you practice and improve.

Big: As a beginner, you should concentrate on the big features. This actually occurs in two forms. First, you should initially focus on correctly performing the big movements. Later, as your skill becomes more refined, you can emphasize the smaller details of the movements. This is much like the way a sculptor carves a statue: first shaping the general outline, then gradually refining it and only later delicately adding the tiny details. The second aspect is performing the movements in a "big" manner; that is, almost exaggerating the motions. This allows you to fully understand

the mechanics of the techniques you are practicing. As your skill develops, you will strive to make the movements more compact.

Strong: It is difficult to swing powerfully until you first learn to swing correctly. So you should wait until you have developed consistency in performing the larger movements before you attempt to develop power in the techniques. Once you are swinging the sword correctly, it is only a matter of practice until you develop strong technique.

Fast: The next stage is to increase the speed of your techniques. Once again, wait until you can perform the techniques properly and with power before trying to develop speed. Otherwise, you are likely to develop fast, sloppy, ineffective techniques instead.

Light: The final stage is to make your techniques light. As you reach a point of exercising *Shin • Ki • Ryoku* in which your mind and spirit together produce technique, your movements will become light and subtle. At this phase, you will have more speed and power than ever before—not as a result of body strength, but due to the refinement of your technique—yet you will appear to be moving effortlessly. Again, do not attempt to perform light techniques immediately; they will only be weak. Instead, the lightness must be the product of countless repetitions and diligent training, resulting in speed and power that appear effortless.

Each stage must be taken in order. If you attempt to skip a stage—from "Big" to "Strong," for instance—you will only end up compounding your errors. The technical skills that produce power are learned during the "Big" phase, so if you try to develop power by some other means, you wind up using muscle strength rather than proper technique, and this only compounds your errors.

"Big" and "Strong" are the only levels at which you can practice to improve. You can mentally concentrate on the "Big" movements, correcting the errors you notice, and you can consciously apply correct technique to increase the power of your movements. But "Fast" and "Light"—although they are achieved through practice—cannot be practiced. They are a by-product of repetition: the natural evolution of your training in the "Big" and "Strong."

SHU • HA • RI

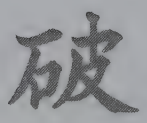
Obey • Break • Separate

Shu • Ha • Ri is a term the Japanese use to describe the overall progression of martial arts training, as well as the lifelong relationship the student will enjoy with his instructor.

Shu

Shu can either mean "to protect" or "to obey." The dual meaning of the term is aptly descriptive of the relationship between a martial arts student and teacher in the student's early stages, which can be likened to the relationship of a parent and child. The student should absorb all the teacher imparts, be eager to learn and willing to accept all correction and constructive criticism. The teacher must guard the student in the sense of watching out for his or her interests and nurturing and encouraging his or her progress, much as a parent guards a child through its growing years. *Shu* stresses basics in an uncompromising fashion so the student has a solid foundation for future learning, and all students perform techniques in identical fashion, even though their personalities, body structure, age, and abilities all differ.

Ha



Ha is another term with an appropriate double meaning: "to break free" or "to frustrate." Sometime after the student reaches *dan* (black belt) level, she will begin to break free in two ways. In terms of technique, the student will break free of the fundamentals and begin to apply the principles acquired from the practice of basics in new, freer, and more imaginative ways. The student's individuality will begin to emerge in the way she performs techniques. At a deeper level, she will also break free of the rigid instruction of the teacher and begin to question and discover more through personal experience. This can be a time of frustration for the teacher, as the student's journey of discovery leads to countless questions beginning with "Why?" At the *Ha* stage, the relationship between student and teacher is similar to that of a parent and an adult child; the

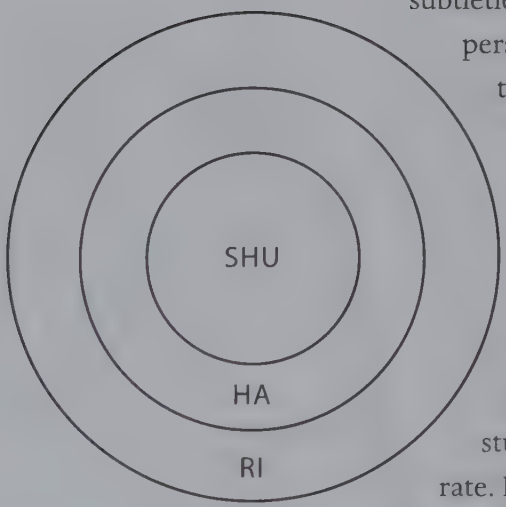
teacher is a master of the art, and the student may now be an instructor to others.

離

Ri

Ri is the stage at which the student, now a *kōdansha* (high-ranking black belt), separates from the instructor, having absorbed all that he can learn from them. This is not to say that the student and teacher are no longer associated. Actually, quite the opposite should be true; they should now have a stronger bond than ever before, much as a grandparent does with a son or daughter who is now also a parent. Although the student is now fully independent, he treasures the wisdom and patient counsel of the teacher and there is a richness to their relationship that comes through their shared experiences. But the student is now learning and progressing more through self-discovery than by instruction and can give outlet to his own creative impulses. The student's techniques will bear the imprint of his own personality and character. *Ri*, too, has a dual meaning, the second part of which is "to set free." As much as the student now seeks independence from the teacher, the instructor likewise must set the student free.

Shu • *Ha* • *Ri* is not a linear progression. It is more akin to concentric circles, so that there is *Shu* within *Ha* and both *Shu* and *Ha* within *Ri*. Thus, the fundamentals remain constant; only the application of them and the subtleties of execution change as the student progresses and her own personality begins to flavor the techniques performed. Similarly, the student and teacher are always bound together by their close relationship and the knowledge, experience, culture, and tradition shared between them.



Ultimately, *Shu* • *Ha* • *Ri* should result in the student surpassing the master, both in knowledge and skill. This is the source of improvement for the art as a whole. If the student never surpasses his master, then the art will stagnate, at best. If the student never achieves the master's ability, the art will deteriorate. But, if the student can assimilate all that the master can impart and then progress to even higher levels of advancement, the art will continually improve and flourish.

SHINGI O OMONZURU

Stand for Righteousness

True martial arts and true martial artists are rooted in a tradition of righteousness. Martial arts are a means of preserving peace and overcoming ill intention. This foundation allows the martial artist to develop *shinnen*, an unflagging strength of conviction which is a powerful motivation.

In battle, however, the martial artist will often find himself pitted against *jadō* (literally, the way of evil) embodied in those who hold to the belief that "all is fair in love and war." You may even encounter instructors whose teaching philosophy would condone such actions as kicking sand into the opponent's eyes to impair his vision while you strike, or similar ploys—no matter how underhanded—to gain an advantage. The true martial artist realizes that *jadō* is more than just unscrupulous fighting techniques. It inevitably degenerates into a perverse approach to life. In effect, this approach applies *Shin • Ku • I* in the negative: misdeeds influence one's speech and ideals, leading to increasingly hostile behavior and an amoral, utterly self-centered attitude.

In addition to its degenerative effects, *jadō* is also inherently weak. There are few people so depraved that their conscience does not bother them when they utilize underhanded methods to gain advantage. This restraining influence, however slight, prevents them from employing *shinnen*, so they cannot put their whole body and soul into their actions. On the other hand, the martial artist who is acting justly can wholeheartedly pursue any endeavor. *Shingi* (righteousness) is therefore an empowering influence, creating a moral imperative that lends not only mental strength, but—through *ken shin ichi nyo*—physical power as well.

SAIGO MADE EIZOKU SURU

Persist to the End

This chapter began with an exhortation for commitment: a challenge to make up your mind to train as a lifestyle. It ends with a similar admonition to persist until the end. Commitment and persistence are the begin-

ning and end of all worthwhile human endeavors. Most simply and directly: **do not quit!**

To understand the importance of persistence, we need only look at the common struggle to control bulging waistlines. The reason why diets fail and people almost always gain back the weight they lost (usually with a little extra thrown in for good measure), is that a diet—by definition—is only a short-term commitment. Diets are designed to accomplish one of three things: to last a certain amount of time, to lose a certain amount of weight, or to lose a certain amount of weight in a certain amount of time. Once this short-term goal is accomplished, the diet ends—by design.

The only weight-loss programs that ever succeed in the long run are nutritional lifestyle changes. This may sound like merely a semantic distinction, but it is not. A diet is temporary, but a nutritional lifestyle is permanent. Lifestyle changes are not dependent upon reaching a predetermined goal; they are lifelong commitments to a different behavior pattern.

The same holds true for *iaijutsu* training. To succeed, you must make a lifelong commitment. Training is not just for a certain time or until you reach a certain goal. Always remember that *iaijutsu* is a method for perfection of character, not a fitness program.

If an accident, illness, or drastic change in your life makes a cessation of training necessary or unavoidable, simply resolve that you will resume as soon as you are able. And then do it! Even if you stop training for five years due to some circumstance, you will not have quit if you eventually resume!

Also remember that there is more to *iaijutsu* than just swinging a sword. If an injury leaves you temporarily or even permanently unable to practice your techniques, you can still continue your training by applying *iaijutsu* principles to other areas of your life. You will probably find that you recover faster if you apply *iaijutsu* principles to your recovery process, whether it is recovering from a physical, emotional, or even a financial setback.

Iaijutsu is training for life-or-death confrontation. To quit means *death*. Once you have decided to be an *iaijutsu* practitioner, you cannot quit!

作法と礼法

Chapter 6

Sa-Hō to Rei-Hō

Preparation and Etiquette

Sa-hō (preparation) and *rei-hō* (etiquette) are almost inseparable in the art of *iaijutsu*, since it is nearly impossible to define where one ends and the other begins.

It is likely that the formal etiquette of *iaijutsu* evolved from the incorporation of the *Ōmori-Ryū Seiza Waza* into the art by Hayashi Rokudayū in the seventeenth century. The descriptions in this chapter are given in the order in which they would normally be practiced while preparing to perform *iaijutsu waza*.

The formalities of *iaijutsu* begin even before you enter the *dōjō*. Even the process of changing into your *hakama* should not only involve a transformation of your outer appearance but a concurrent transformation of your state of mind. By the time you finish tying the bow on the front of your *hakama*, you should have set aside all the concerns of everyday life in order to concentrate exclusively and intensely on your *iaijutsu* practice. When you pick up your sword, now clothed as a *samurai*, your training has already begun and you perform the first formality of swordsmanship.

6A: TEITŌ

Carrying the Sword

It will seem to the beginner that even the smallest detail of *iaijutsu* is rigidly controlled, starting with something as simple as carrying the sword. But when you consider that an *iaijutsu* battle is won in the blink of an eye, you will realize that such details often meant the difference between life and death to the *samurai*.

Figure 6A-1: Teitō (Front View)

Figure 6A-2: Teitō (Side View)

When standing or walking prior to, or following, *iaijutsu* practice, the sword is normally held in the left hand at the left hip as shown in Figures 6A-1 (front view) and 6A-2 (side view).

Note (Figure 6A-1) that the sword is turned slightly outward from vertical (15 to 30 degrees), so the hand is held in a natural position.

As shown in Figure 6A-2, the *tsuka* is slightly higher than the *kojiri* to prevent the sword from falling from the scabbard.

To ensure that the sword remains in the scabbard, especially while moving, it is extremely important that the thumb remain hooked over the *tsuba* while holding and carrying the sword.

Posture is discussed in detail in Chapter 5. Generally, however, the body should be held erect but not stiff, with the shoulders relaxed. The head must be straight, but the chin not pulled in.

The left hand, gripping the *saya* just beneath the *tsuba*, should be resting against the body at the left hip with the elbow tucked in close to the body. The right hand is curled into a comfortably loose fist and should rest along the right thigh.

The cords (*sageo*) are gripped between the index and middle fingers of the left hand to keep them from dangling loosely where they might catch on objects while moving. (Gripping the *sageo* in the right hand is done diferently. See the *Tōrei* section beginning on page 69. By gripping them between the index and middle fingers, they can be held securely while holding the *saya*, allowing the thumb to be latched over the *tsuba*.

This is the position in which the sword should be held when entering the *dōjō* to begin *iaijutsu* practice.

6B: HAIREI

Bowing to the Dōjō/Founder

Immediately upon entering the *dōjō*, an *iaijutsu* student must show respect for the training area and the founder or grandmaster of the style (as represented by the founder's or grandmaster's portrait on the wall) by bowing. This initial bow, called *hairei* (bow of respect), should be made in the direction of the founder or grandmaster's portrait. If there is no portrait

in the *dōjō*, then bow facing an appropriate symbol of the *dōjō* such as its emblem, flag, *dōjō* shrine, or similar focal point.

The *hairei* bow begins from a standing position, with the sword held at the left hip as shown in Figures 6B-1 and 6B-9.

The sword is transferred from the left hand to the right hand, turning it so the *tsuka* is to the rear of the body, as shown in Figure 6B-11. During this transfer, care must be taken to handle the *sageo* properly, pinning the cords (still looped) against the *saya* with the palm of the right hand, so they can be readily retrieved by the left hand when the sword is switched back to the left hand after the *hairei* bow is completed.

Notice the direction of the curvature of the *saya* in the photographs of *hairei* in side view. In the proper position for *hairei*, the sharp edge of the sword is held downward, opposite from the correct position for drawing the sword. In addition, the *tsuka* is behind the right forearm, also making it difficult to draw. Since an attack cannot readily be initiated from this position, it is a proper position for demonstrating the deepest sincerity, trust, and respect.

As shown in Figure 6B-12, the bow is made from the hips only. The back, neck, and head remain straight. Do not lift the chin to look forward, but allow the head to tilt at the same angle as the upper body. Similarly, do not "peek" up when bowing, but allow the eyes to sight downward at the same angle as the head.

Figures 6B-1 through 6B-4.

Figures 6B-5 through 6B-16.

There is no prescribed duration for the *hairei* bow. The important factor is that the length and character of the bow reflect the sincerity of the student's respect. Even a long bow will be disrespectful if the student's posture and demeanor belie it as hypocritical.

6C: SHIREI

Bowing to the Instructor

At the beginning of class, the students will all assemble facing the instructor in the *seiza* (kneeling/seated) position.

The correct method to assume *seiza* from a standing position is detailed in Chapter 6. As students initially reach *seiza*, they will still be holding their swords (*teitō*) at their left hips, as shown in Figure 6C-1. Prior to bowing, students will first transfer their swords to a position at their right sides, as depicted in Figures 6C-1 through 6C-6 below. Begin by drawing the sword diagonally from left to right across the body until the *tsuba* is past the center of the body (Figure 6C-2). Transfer the *sageo* to the right hand, taking them between the middle- and ring-fingers, so that the index finger is free to clasp over the edge of the *tsuba* (Figure 6C-3). Slide the left had along the *saya* to the left hip and use the right hand to draw the sword forward (Figure 6C-4) until it slides free of the left hand. Then place it along your right side with the *tsuba* even with your right knee (Figure 6C-5) and straighten to correct *seiza* posture (Figure 6C-6).

Once again, posture in *seiza* is erect, with the shoulders and arms relaxed. The head is straight, but the chin is not tucked in. The hands rest naturally on the tops of the thighs.

As seen in Figure 6C-6, the sharp edge of the sword, revealed by the curvature of the *saya*, is facing toward the student. This would make the sword difficult to draw quickly and shows the student's respect and trust for the instructor. The *sageo* are neatly aligned along the outer curve of the *saya* and folded in half, so the ends rest close to the *kurikata* to which they are tied.

The instructor will give the command, "*Rei*," and the students bow together toward the instructor (*shirei*).

Figures 6C-1 through 6C-11 Shirei

Ordinarily, when bowing in the *seiza* position, the left hand is placed hand on the floor first, followed by the right hand. However, when bowing to the instructor (*shirei*), students demonstrate their implicit trust by moving both hands simultaneously, as shown in Figures 6C-7 through 6C-11. The tips of the index fingers come together, and the natural angle of the arms forms an "arrow" in the space between them (see Figure 6C-8). The bow is again made from the waist, keeping the back and head straight. Do not allow the hips to rise when bowing in the *seiza* position.

The forehead does not touch the floor, but remains four to six inches above the floor, with the nose centered above the triangular region between the index fingers. At the deepest part of the bow, the spine should be parallel to the floor (see Figure 6C-9).

The longer the bow is held in this position, the more respect is shown to the instructor. It is always good manners for students to hold the bow until the instructor has bowed in return and begun to rise, then the students follow.

To rise, simply reverse the procedure for bowing. Straighten from the waist, being sure to keep the back and head straight, while pushing upward with the arms. Once the arms have nearly straightened, the hands will almost naturally return to their original positions (shown in Figure 6C-11) simply by continuing to rise to an erect posture.

6D: TŌREI

Bowing to the Sword

After bowing to the instructor, *iaijutsu* students show respect for their swords by bowing to them as well. The sword was the life of the *samurai*. Without it, he would surely perish in battle, and because of its grace, beauty, and strength the sword seemed to possess a spirit of its own to the *samurai*.

The *samurai*'s respect for his sword goes beyond mere appreciation, however. It more closely resembles the respect the American cowboys of the late nineteenth century had for their horses. At the end of a hard workday, bone-weary and choking on trail dust, the cowboy would unsaddle,

curry, feed, and water his horse even before preparing his own well-deserved meal and resting from his labors. That was true respect!

There are many useful parallels between American cowboys and Japanese *samurai*. Without a stout horse, a cowboy might well find himself suffering a lonely, agonizing death by starvation on the vast prairie, so he did well to show his mount proper respect. He usually had a name for his horse, and treated it as a friend and partner. Similarly, the *samurai* has long depended upon his sword for his life and livelihood. Many named their swords and treated them as if they had a life of their own.

Perhaps one reason the cowboy and the *samurai* have come to hold such prominence in each of their respective cultures—and both continue to influence their cultures and philosophies to this day—is that both the *samurai* of feudal Japan and the cowboy of the Wild West developed such a similar appreciation for the fine line between life and death and how to cope with it. Those with an appreciation of western folklore, especially the famed Code of the West, which had many similarities to the Code of *Bushidō*, may more readily understand the subtleties of *samurai* philosophy.

The *samurai* symbolizes his respect for his sword with the *tōrei* (bow to the sword). Since the *tōrei* is normally performed immediately after *shirei* at the beginning of a class or just prior to *shirei* at the end of class, it will usually begin from the position shown in Figure 6D-1.

To begin the *tōrei* from the position shown in Figure 6D-1, catch up the *sageo* between the middle and ring fingers, using the index finger to hold the *tsuba*, and pick up the sword. Gently place the *kojiri* on the floor to the outside-front of the right knee, as shown in Figure 6D-4, with the *saya* tilted back toward you at about a 45-degree angle. From this point, carefully lay the sword down in front of you, perpendicular to the direction you are facing, as illustrated in Figure 6D-5.

The *tsuba* should be aligned with the outside of the left knee, and the sharpened edge of the sword should be toward you, as evidenced by the curvature of the *saya*. Next, carefully arrange the *sageo* along the outer edge of the *saya*, so they extend about two-thirds the length of the sword, allowing them to double back from that point and cross the *saya*, as shown in Figure 6D-6. By draping the ends of the *sageo* over the *saya*, they can

Figures 6D-1 through 6D-12 Tōrei

13

Figure 6D-13

more easily be grasped when picking up the sword after the *tōrei* is completed. After arranging the *sageo*, straighten to *seiza* position with erect posture and hands resting on the thighs, looking straight ahead (Figure 6D-7).

The *tōrei* bow is then performed almost exactly as the *shirei* bow. The first exception is that before moving the hands, look at the sword, then place the left hand on the floor in front of the sword (Figure 6D-8), followed by the right hand, and bow from the waist, as shown in Figure 6D-10.

Once again, the duration of the bow is a benchmark of the sincerity of your respect for the sword with which you are training, so be certain your demeanor reflects genuine respect from your heart.

As you rise from *tōrei*, continue looking at your sword (Figure 6D-11) while both hands are still touching the floor. As you draw your hands back to your thighs and straighten (Figure 6D-12), allow your gaze to rise with your head, so that you are looking straight ahead at the completion of the bow (Figure 6D-13).

It is also common to perform *tōrei* from a standing position. This is done, for example, when first picking up the sword to prepare for practice, or when removing the sword after *waza* practice in order to use a *bokken* or *jō* for a portion of class.

A standing *tōrei* begins at "attention," with the feet together and erect posture, as in Figure 6D-14. The *sageo* should be looped between the middle and ring finger of the right hand and the right index finger should be hooked over the *tsuba* to be sure the sword does not slide from its *saya*. Raise the sword between shoulder and eye level so it rests on the upturned palms of both hands. As depicted in Figure 6D-17, the left hand should be positioned near the *kojiri* (end of the *saya*), and eyes looking directly at the sword. From this position, bow from the waist, again keeping the back and neck straight, until your forehead is level with or lower than the sword, as shown in Figure 6D-18.

As before, the duration of your bow and your attitude while performing it are an indication of the sincerity of your respect. It is disrespectful to

Figures 6D-14 through 6D-20 Standing Tōrei

treat this bow as a begrudging duty rather than an opportunity to express heartfelt appreciation.

6E: TAITŌ

Wearing the Sword

In one way of thinking, the completion of *tōrei* and placing the sword in position for practice marks the delineation between *rei-hō* and *sa-hō*. However, this is only a superficial distinction. Proper etiquette is a vital part of *sa-hō* for training. After all, in *iaijutsu*, as with every true martial art, *Rei ni Hajimari, rei ni owaru:* Everything begins and ends with respect. So the

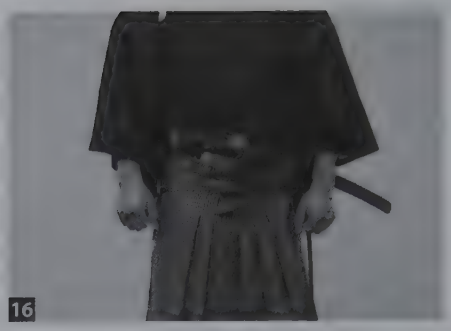
Figures 6E-1 through 6E-2 Taitō

outward manifestations of respect—bowing and formal courtesies—are simply an integral part of *sa-hō*. Furthermore, proper preparation is an outward demonstration of respect for one's self, *dōjō*, *sensei*, sword, and colleagues. True *rei-hō*, however, as we shall see later in this chapter, is *internal*. Although we try to make a distinction between *sa-hō* and *rei-hō* for explanatory purposes, in practice the two are truly inseparable.

Once *tōrei* has been completed from the *seiza* position, you will be in the position shown in Figure 6E-1, with your sword in front of you. Use the right hand to grasp the *sageo* between the middle- and ring-fingers (Figure 6E-2) and run the hand along the *saya* to the *tsuba* (Figure 6E-3). Grasp the *saya*, hooking the right index finger over the *tsuba*. Pick up the sword and stand it straight up in front of you with the *kojiri* resting on the floor, centered between your knees (Figure 6E-4). The curve of the *saya* (denoting the sharp edge of the blade) should be facing toward you. Once in this position, you should be looking past the sword to your training partner, instructor, any other person who is facing you, or in *enzan no metsuke* (as if gazing at distant mountains). While still looking beyond the sword, reach forward with the left hand, touching the *saya* with your fingertips at a point about one-third the distance from the *kojiri* to the *saya* (Figure 6E-5), then run your left hand down to the *kojiri* (Figure 6E-6). Lift the *kojiri* slightly off the floor with your left hand, and pull it unhurriedly toward your left hip, as you allow the *tsuka* to tilt forward in your right hand (Figure 6E-7).

Once the *kojiri* has reached your belt level, use your left hand to insert it into your *obi* near your left side (Figure 6E-8). Do not insert the *kojiri* at

Figures 6E-3 through 6E-14 show the correct position of the sword in a seated position.



Figures 6E-15 through 6E-16 Taitō Standing

the hip, but instead at the front left side of your body. The *kojiri* should be inserted only under the first winding of the *obi*, rather than between the *obi* and *iaidō-gi*.

It is also very important not to "stir" the *tsuka* around while inserting it. It is acceptable to move the *left* hand considerably while inserting the *kojiri*, but the right hand should remain as still as possible.

Once the left hand has manipulated the *kojiri* between the layers of the *obi*, use the right hand to push the sword through, so it emerges at the left hip, while pulling the *saya* with the left hand (Figure 6E-9). The sword is fully inserted when the *tsuba* is directly in front of the navel, jutting about one foot in front of the body, as shown in Figure 6E-10. Use the left hand to take the *sageo* from the right hand and drape them over the *saya* at the point where it emerges from the *obi* at the left hip (Figure 6E-11). Make any final adjustments needed (Figure 6E-12). When the sword is completely in place, lower the left hand first (Figure 6E-13), then the right hand (Figure 6E-14) to your thighs. You are now ready to begin *iaijutsu* practice.

6F: TACHI REI

Standing Bow

Under less formal circumstances, such as when changing partners during practice, *tachi rei* (a standing bow) can be performed for expediency while in *taitō* (simply holding the sword at the hip or while it is being worn). From a normal standing posture, whether holding the sword or wearing it, make sure your left thumb is hooked over the *tsuba* to prevent the sword

from sliding out of the *saya* as you bow, then simply bow from the hips, keeping the back and neck straightly aligned as illustrated previously for *hairei* (see Figure 6B-12).

6G: DATTŌ

Removing the Sword

Once you have completed *iaijutsu* practice, you will return to the formal *seiza* position. There are similar formalities at the conclusion of practice to those performed beforehand, and these are of the utmost importance, since they are again a reflection of the respect and dedication of the practitioner.

Dattō (removal of the sword at the conclusion of practice) is performed in nearly the exact reverse of the procedure for *taitō*, or wearing the sword. Beginning from the *seiza* posture, as shown in Figure 6G-1, grasp the *sageo* between the index and middle fingers of the left hand and remove them from behind the *saya*. With a small circular motion of the left hand, form a loop with the *sageo* as you pass them to the right hand, gripping them between the middle and ring fingers of the right hand (Figure 6G-2). The

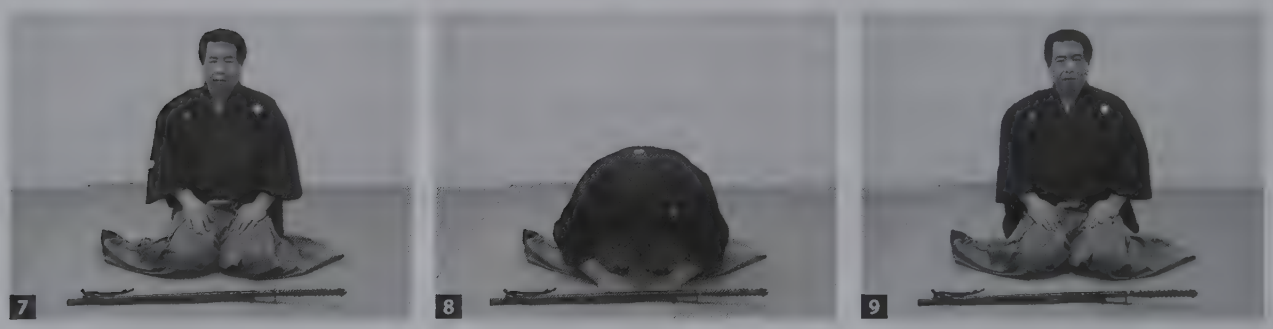
Figures 6G-1 through 6G-6 Dattō

right hand then grasps the *saya* near the *tsuba*, with the index finger hooked over the *tsuba* to secure it in place, and the left hand returns to the left hip.

While the left hand remains at the hip, as though preventing the *obi* from snagging on the *saya* while it is removed, the right hand pulls the *saya* toward the right-front of the body, as shown in Figure 6G-3. The right hand then tilts the *tsuka* back toward the body, swinging the *kojiri* outward beyond the right knee, where it is carefully placed on the floor, as shown in Figure 6G-4.

Gently lay the *saya* on its side in front of you, with the *tsuba* aligned with the outside of your left knee, as shown in Figure 6G-5, and straighten the *sageo* along its outer edge, draping them across the *saya* about two-thirds the distance from the *tsuba* to the *kojiri* (Figure 6G-6).

Straighten, with your eyes looking straight ahead, not yet at the sword, then perform *tōrei* in the manner described previously in greater detail (Figures 6G-7 through 6G-9).



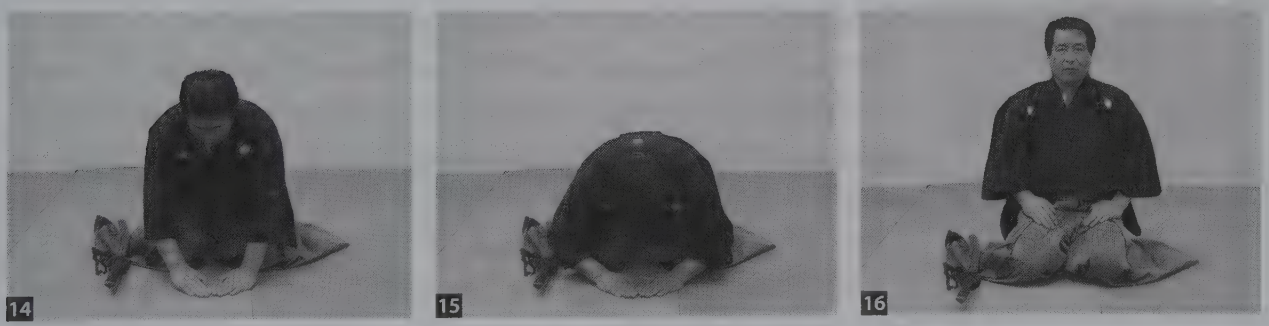
Figures 6G-7 through 6G-9 Tōrei

As always, the duration of your bow is a reflection of the sincerity and depth of your respect for your sword. This fact bears frequent repetition, as it is too often overlooked in martial arts today. The measure of your respect should not be based on the value or condition of your sword. Even if your sword is of low quality and minimal commercial value, it is *your* sword. It is the sword with which you train. It is the sword which you are using to reshape your mind, your values, and your character. For that reason, if nothing else, it merits your deep and heartfelt respect regardless of its cost or condition!

Figures 6G-10 through 6G-13 Preparing for Shirei

Most often, this *tōrei* will be followed by bowing to the instructor (*shirei*). In such cases, the instructor will clearly indicate that this is to be the case, and it will only be necessary to follow his lead or direction. To transition from *tōrei* to *shirei*, use the right hand to grasp the *sageo* between the middle and ring fingers (as in Figure 6G-10) running the hand along the *saya* to the *tsuba*, then grasp the *saya*, with the index finger hooked over the *tsuba* (see Figure 6G-11), raise the sword, and place it at your right side with the *tsuba* aligned with your right knee (Figure 6G-12), then straighten in preparation for *shirei* (Figure 6G-13).

Refer to the preceding description of *shirei* for a detailed review of this bowing to the instructor, which is summarized in Figures 6G-14 through 6G-16 below.



Figures 6G-14 through 6G-16 Shirei

Upon rising from *shirei*, use the right hand to grasp the *sageo* between the middle and ring fingers and run the hand along the *saya* to the *tsuba*, then grasp the *saya*, with the index finger hooked over the *tsuba* (see Figure

6G-17), and raise the sword, placing the *kojiri* on the floor, centered between your knees as shown in Figure 6G-18. From this position, take the *sageo* in your left hand, between the index and middle fingers, as you grasp the *saya* with the thumb hooked over the *tsuba*, then hold the sword at your left hip (Figure 6G-19), just as if you were standing upright (see *Teitō* described at the beginning of this chapter).

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18

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Figures 6G-17 through 6G-19 Teitō

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Figure 6G-20

Rise to your feet by first raising the right foot, then use both legs to rise to a standing position. If necessary (but avoid this if possible), you may press your right hand against your right knee for assistance in rising. However, never use the sword as a crutch to assist you in rising. It is better to fall down than to disgrace your sword in this manner! As you rise, bring the feet together by drawing the left foot forward to the right foot. Although it may seem easier at first, do not step back with the right foot, as this can be taken as a sign of timidity unbecoming for a *samurai*.

If you have been practicing with a partner, or if an observer or audience has been watching your practice, or if you were not instructed to perform *shirei* to your *sensei* at the close of class, it is customary to perform *hairei* to these individuals immediately upon standing.

You are now ready to leave the training area.

Turning your back on an observer would be disrespectful, and turning your back on your training partner is not only disrespectful, but could be construed as an insult by implying that your partner's sword skills are not worthy of your concern. For this reason, even if you were training alone, walk backwards to the edge of the training area. Be certain to make your first backward step with your left foot (since a right-foot-forward stance facilitates drawing the sword and makes you less vulnerable to attack).

When you reach the edge of the training area, perform a standing bow with your sword held at the left hip, then walk to the *dōjō* exit. Before you leave the *dōjō*, turn and again bow in the direction of the *dōjō* emblem, shrine, or other suitable focal point as your final gesture of respect before exiting.

If, for any reason, you did not perform *tōrei* at the conclusion of your practice while in the *seiza* position, you should always give due respect to your sword before changing out of your *hakama* and leaving the *dōjō*. In such cases, before putting your sword away, raise it in your hands as described earlier in this chapter, and perform a standing *tōrei*.

The more you perform the formalities of *iaijutsu*, the more profoundly you will understand and appreciate the depth of respect that is inherent to the *sa-hō* and *rei-hō* of this art. In addition to the outward expressions of respect performed during *hairei*, *shirei*, and *tōrei*, the very actions of *sahō* themselves—the painstaking handling of the sword during *teitō*, *taitō*, and *dattō*—are suffused with respect. The time and attention we pay to these seemingly insignificant details of ritual, and the degree of sincere devotion we give these actions, are themselves gestures of respect, in much the same way that "quality time" with someone is an expression of our love or respect for him.

So avoid the temptation to rush through the *sa-hō* and *rei-hō* in order to begin the "fun" part of your training. Take the time to appreciate your sword, your *dōjō*, your teacher, and your fellow students. Take the time to fully prepare your garments, equipment, and body for training, and you will find this helps calm and prepare your mind, as well. As you mature in your training, you will discover that *sa-hō* and *rei-hō* become some of the most enriching time you will spend in the *dōjō*. By learning the true meaning of respect and practicing it on a daily basis, you will find that the respect you develop for your sword, your *dōjō*, your teacher, and your colleagues will increase the amount of respect you have for yourself.

REI NI TSUITE

True Respect

We have devoted an entire chapter to preparation and respect, pointing out that the two are inseparable in *iaijutsu* training, but to this point we

have explained only the outward manifestations of respect without discussing what is most important: the *inward* manifestation of respect.

The emphasis *iaijutsu* places on *sa-hō* and *rei-hō* is an application of the principle of *Shin • Ku • I* (see Chapter 3). By constantly practicing the physical expressions of respect (*shin*, the body), we gradually develop a more respectful attitude that then shows in our speech (*ku*, the mouth), and eventually harnesses our mind (*i*). This is why we have described *sa-hō* and *rei-hō* in such painstaking detail. These physical actions themselves are not what is truly important. Their importance lies in the process our minds and spirits undergo as a result of these repetitive actions. As we mature as martial artists, respect becomes so inherent to, and evident in, our spirit and demeanor that the depth or duration of a bow no longer expresses the depth and sincerity of our respect, but instead respect exudes from our inner being and overshadows our physical actions.

So respect is far more that courtesy and etiquette. It must become an attitude that pervades every aspect of our character. In simplest terms, it is *caring* about people and things. Consider again the analogies between *samurai* and cowboys. Cowboys cared about their horses, just as *samurai* cared about their swords, because their lives depended upon them. This care moved them to *care* for their swords and horses,—even to placing the well-being of their swords and horses before their personal comfort, and demonstrating their care by naming them and showing them outward courtesies.

Respect also has two sides, like a coin—respect for the benefit and value of someone or something and respect for its potential danger. The sword that protected the *samurai*'s life, if mishandled, could also injure or kill its owner. And every cowboy knew that to walk behind a horse without placing a hand on its haunch to let it know he was there could lead to a painful or even fatal kick. Even an enemy was to be respected for the danger he represented.

Viewed in this context, every aspect of our training derives from respect. The care we take in *sa-hō* shows our respect for the *dōjō*, our equipment, and colleagues. The courtesies we offer in *rei-hō* likewise demonstrate our respect. But also, the diligence and perseverance we exercise in perfecting our skills are derived from respect for our potential opponents. As you

read Chapter 7 and practice the fundamentals and principles of *iaijutsu*, consider how respect for the skill of your potential opponents is exemplified in *shisei* (posture and bearing), *kamae* (correct stances that optimize balance and power), *chakugan* (maintaining eye contact), *maai* (controlling the distance between yourself and opponents), *kihaku* (the intensity of your spirit), and *zanshin* (a constant state of alertness and vigilance).

Respect is not merely a matter of courtesy and politeness; it is a matter of life and death!

You will also find that the time you spend cultivating respect through the depth and sincerity of your *rei-hō* will reap great rewards by improving your personal relationships. As you learn to take the time to demonstrate your respect and appreciation, these attributes will carry over from the *dōjō* into your personal life. There it will reveal itself in your desire and ability to invest time in the people you care about, the way you treat customers and coworkers, and help solidify those relationships you hold most dear.

Chapter 7

Kihon

Fundamentals

Kihon, or fundamentals, are those attributes that underlie all *Eishin-Ryū Waza* (techniques). Once you have mastered the fundamentals, it will be far easier to apply them to the performance of *waza* (Chapters 8 through 13). Each element of *kihon* is explained in detail in this chapter, so that such detail can be omitted from the subsequent chapters describing *Eishin-Ryū Waza*. Thus, this chapter will be a reference as you practice the *waza* presented later.

Generally, these fundamentals are grouped into categories of related items, but since their functions are all interrelated, it is impossible to completely separate them from each other. In this chapter we will first explain the major actions used in *iaijutsu*: *tsuka no nigiri kata* (gripping the sword), *nukitsuke* (drawing cut), *furikaburi* (raising), *kirioroshi* (downward cut), *chiburi* (shaking blood off), and *nōtō* (resheathing).

After describing the key elements of these major actions, we will review the general principles that maximize their effectiveness, such as *shisei* (posture), *kamae* (stance), *kokyū* (breathing), *chakugan* (eye contact), *maai* (distance), *kihaku* (focus and power), and *zanshin* (spirit), and relate how these principles affect the physical actions and techniques.

The importance of *kihon* cannot be overemphasized. Without sound fundamentals—all working together flawlessly—you will not be able to perform *iaijutsu* techniques or *waza* with grace and precision. Furthermore, from a practical standpoint, until you have truly mastered the fundamentals, you will not be unable to generate sufficient power, control, and accuracy to actually cut effectively.

Part I—Major Actions

The major actions involved in *iaijutsu* techniques are presented here in the same order in which they would usually be performed in a *waza*.

Figure 7A-1 Grip Position Right Hand (Top View)

7A: TSUKA NO NIGIRI KATA

Gripping the Handle

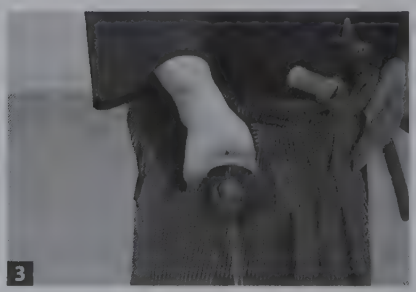
Fundamentals begin with correctly gripping the sword. Without a proper grip, you will be unable to draw or swing the sword correctly, so the grip is the most fundamental aspect of *iaijutsu* basics.

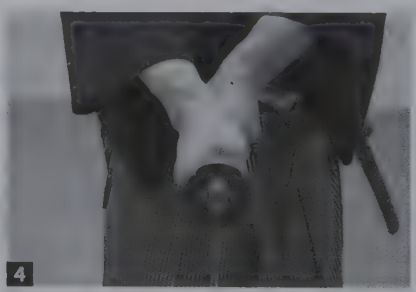
The right hand is placed in front, gripping the *tsuka* just behind the *fuchigane* (the fitting directly behind the *tsuba*). As shown in Figure 7A-1, this leaves the thumb and index finger about three-quarters-inch away from the *tsuba*—not pressed up against the *tsuba* as many beginners suppose.

The groove between the thumb and forefinger rests along the top of the *tsuka* and the middle knuckles of the fingers are aligned on the bottom of the *tsuka*. The top view in Figure 7A-2 shows this alignment of the right hand.

The left hand is aligned in identical fashion approximately the width of one finger behind the right hand. The correct grip with both hands is shown in Figures 7A-3 (side view) and 7A-4 (top view).

Figure 7A-2 Grip Position Right Hand (Top View)





Figures 7A-3 and 7A-4 Correct Grip with Both Hands

As the sword is swung downward to cut, both hands squeeze together, twisting slightly inward toward the center as if wringing the last drops of water out of a twisted wet towel. This motion, called *tsuka no nigiri kata* (wringing the handle), tightens the grip while the blade is moving and helps ensure that it travels straight downward to make a clean, unwavering cut.

7B: NUKITSUKE

Drawing Cut

The dominant characteristic of *iaijutsu*, the element which makes the art unique and distinctive, is that the first movement—drawing the sword from its scabbard—also simultaneously *cuts* the opponent. This technique, called *nukitsuke*, is referred to as—the Life of *Iaidō* because, quite literally, life hangs in the balance. If this first cutting stroke is successful, the *samurai* has assured his victory; if not, the advantage will almost certainly shift to his opponent.

With some fifty-two *kata* or, more correctly, *waza* in the *Eishin-Ryū* system, there are numerous *nukitsuke* variations. Some are designed to strike level during the draw, others upward or downward, and still others block the opponent's first strike, then counterattack in a single, fluid motion that is all but unstoppable. All of these, however, work on the same basic principles, so only the most basic—the level drawing-cut—will be described in this chapter.

Nukitsuke begins from the preparatory posture, either *seiza* (kneeling seated), *tatehiza* (semi-seated), or *tachi* (standing), depending upon the technique being employed. Since it is the most fundamental posture, *seiza* will be used in this description of *nukitsuke*.

Both hands move simultaneously toward the *tsuka*. In *shoden* (initial level) techniques (Chapter 8), the left hand encircles the *saya* with the thumb uppermost, near the *koiguchi* slightly before the right hand touches the *tsuka*. Just as the right hand begins to grasp the *tsuka*, the left thumb presses almost imperceptibly forward against the edge of the *tsuba*, pushing it about one half-inch forward. Since the *habaki* usually fits quite snugly into the *koiguchi*, this loosens the sword from the scabbard to ensure a

Figure 7B-1 Koiguchi no Kiri Kata

smooth and fast draw. This subtle yet essential movement is called *koiguchi no kiri kata* (opening the *koiguchi*). A close-up of the hands performing *koiguchi no kiri kata* is shown in Figure 7B-1.

In addition to this basic method of *koiguchi no kiri kata*, there are two variations. One alternative is to keep the tip of the thumb hidden behind the *tsuba*, pushing against the flat of the *tsuba*, rather than its outer edge. This hides the movement from the opponent and may delay his reaction a few precious tenths of a second. This stealth variation, called *uchi-giri*, is actually the preferred method in *Eishin-Ryū*, with the more noticeable version (*soto-giri*) being used only in the *Shoden Waza* (Chapter 8).

The second variation does not use the thumb at all. With the left hand wrapped around the *saya*, very close to the *koiguchi*, the hand is simply squeezed tight, which swells the hand sufficiently so that the sides of the thumb and index finger press the *tsuba* forward, resulting in *koiguchi no kiri kata*. This variation would normally be employed in a situation in which you were uncertain of your opponent's intentions, but you want an advantage if they are found to be hostile. In this way, the left hand can open the *koiguchi* completely unnoticed, while the right hand remains away from the sword, thus giving no apparent signs of threat. Whenever a *samurai* made an overt *koiguchi no kiri kata*, it signalled hostility to his opponent and nearly always resulted in a preemptive counterattack—an act which this second disguised variation would not provoke.

Just as *koiguchi no kiri kata* is completed, the right hand grasps the *tsuka*, with the middle knuckles aligned along the upturned ridge of the *tsuka*. Initially, the grip is loose, with only the fingers and thumb in contact with the *tsuka* as the drawing motion begins (Figure 7B-2). The right hand pulls the sword from the *saya* while the left hand draws the *saya* back. This dual motion has the effect of nearly doubling the speed of the draw. It is crucial that the right hand guides the *tsuka-gashira* directly toward the opponent's eyes (Figure 7B-5) during the first two-thirds of the drawing motion, preventing the opponent from seeing exactly how much of the sword has been drawn and thus throwing off his timing for a block or counterattack.

Figures 7B-2 through 7B-11 Nukitsuke Front View

As the *kissaki* leaves the *saya*, both hands twist 90 degrees counterclockwise (Figure 7B-6) and the fingers of the right hand tighten into a normal (one-handed) grip, snapping the sword free and causing it to swing forward parallel to the ground, cutting the opponent (Figures 7B-7 through 7B-9) as you step forward. From *seiza*, a deep lunging step is taken with *nukitsuke* to ensure that the opponent does not evade the cut (Figures 7B-7 through 7B-11). *Nukitsuke* finishes with the sword at shoulder level, the *kissaki* just slightly lower than the tsuba and pointing at the opponent (Figure 7B-11).

Your feeling while performing *nukitsuke* is extremely important. Drawing and cutting should not feel like two separate but linked functions; instead, it should have the feeling of one movement, the sole purpose of which is cutting the opponent. Drawing the sword is merely a by-product of this cutting motion.

Figures 7B-12 through 7B-20 Nukitsuke Side View

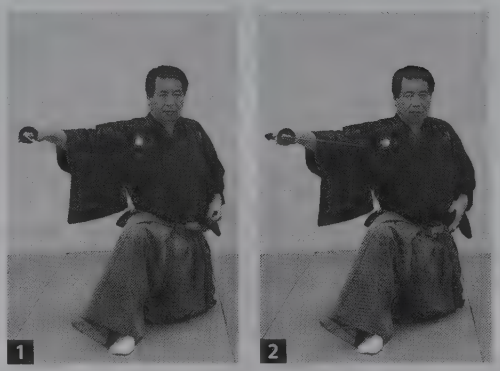
Some aspects of *nukitsuke* are perhaps best seen in the side view presented in Figures 7B-12 through 7B-20 above. In particular, note that the back remains as straight as possible throughout the *nukitsuke* process. Essential for both speed and power of the cutting technique, the rear foot should not remain flat on the floor. Both feet are raised by the point depicted in Figure 7B-17 and set on the balls of the feet, providing greater stability and power for the lunging step completed in Figure 7B-20.

7C: FURIKABURI

Raising the Sword

Once the sword is drawn and the first cutting motion is complete, the sword is raised overhead in preparation for the powerful, downward finishing cut. This raising of the sword, called *furikaburi*, is performed in a manner which affords the best combination of speed and protection against attack.

With the sword still level from *nukitsuke* (edge toward opponent, as shown in Figure 7C-1), the *kissaki* is swung backward by first bending the right wrist. This action should feel as if you are trying to poke yourself in the left ear with the *kissaki* (Figures 7C-1 through 7C-4). As your bent wrist reaches the limit of its range of flexibility, your elbow should then begin to bend, as shown in Figure 7C-4. The motion must remain smooth and uninterrupted until the *tsuba* is directly in front of your nose (Figure 7C-5), at which point the sword is raised directly overhead. The left hand raises at the same time, so that it grips the sword the instant it has reached the fully raised position shown in Figure 7C-7.



Figures 7C-1 through 7C-7 Furikaburi Front View

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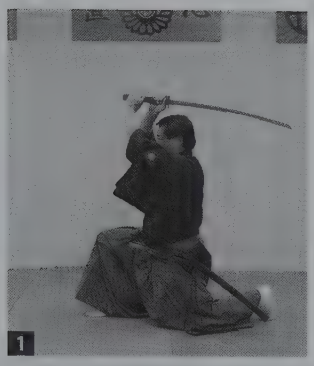
Figures 7C-8 through 7C-14
Furikaburi Side View

Figures 7C-8 through 7C-14 show *furikaburi* in side view. From this perspective it is easier to see that at the completion of *furikaburi*, the sword should be about level with the ground. It is permissible for the *kissaki* to be lower than the *tsuba*, but it should not be higher since this will reduce swinging power and speed.

7D: KIRIOROSHI

Downward Cut

With the sword raised overhead, you are now poised for *kirioroshi*. Although *nukitsuke* is the Life of *Iaidō*, it does not always inflict a fatal wound. Instead, it gains the extra few moments a *samurai* needed to execute a killing technique. *Nukitsuke* is only effective on the first opponent, so another technique is needed to deal with situations involving multiple opponents. This technique, *kirioroshi* (also called *kirikudashi* in an alternate reading of the same *kanji*), is instantly fatal if performed correctly, since it slices from the top of the skull all the way down to the navel.



Figures 7D-1 through 7D-6
Kirioroshi Side View

While this may conjure brutal images, it is not only necessary for self-defense, but—equally important to the *samurai*—it was an act of respect and compassion for his enemy. The safest way to win a sword battle is to cut the adversary's arm. Wounded, the opponent cannot wield his sword and will either bleed to death or succumb later to infection. However, to allow a foe to die in such an ignominious manner would be highly disrespectful. A *samurai*, after all, lived for *giri* (duty and honor). To lose his ability to serve his master or to die pitifully ravaged by gangrene would be the ultimate shame to him and his family. On the other hand, to die at the hands of a master swordsman, serving his lord proudly and making the supreme sacrifice, would bring only honor to his memory. Thus, the *samurai*'s goal in a sword battle was to dispatch his enemy as quickly and painlessly as possible, both as a matter of self-preservation and out of respect for an honorable foe. The surest way of accomplishing this is *kirioroshi*.

Kirioroshi begins with the sword raised at the completion of *furikaburi* (see Figure 7D-1).

As the sword is swung forward and down, the arms and wrists straighten and reach full extension at a point just above the target, as shown in Figure 7D-3. At the point of impact (Figure 7D-3), the blade is turned upward at about a 45-degree angle. From this point, it completes the cut by following the natural downward arc of your hands as they drop to waist level (Figures 7D-4 through 7D-6).

Figures 7D-7 through 7D-10 Kirioroshi Front View

The sword completes *kirioroshi* when the hands reach waist height. At this point, the sword is almost level, with the *kissaki* only slightly lower than the base of the *tsuba*. When *kirioroshi* is performed kneeling (as shown in Figure 7D-6), the *tsuba* is aligned with the front of the knee, and the *tsuka* is at thigh level. When standing, *kirioroshi* is completed at precisely the same point, but the knee and thigh are not available as handy reference points. Instead, the *tsuka* will be at or just below belly-button level and the *tsukagashira* will be about six inches in front of the body.

No muscle strength is involved in making the sword cut; it is purely a matter of technique. In Japanese, all of the technical aspects of cutting are collectively referred to as *te no uchi* (inside the hands).

7E: TE NO UCHI

Cutting Technique

The objective of *kirioroshi*, and all other cutting techniques, is to make the blade *slice*—not hit or chop—the target, so the blade must travel straight and cut completely through the target. A *samurai* cannot afford to get his sword wedged in an opponent's body. The time it takes to work it free might easily cost him his life!

The first way to ensure a straight cut is to be certain the blade does not vibrate as it swings downward. This is called *hasuji o tōsu*. Proper *tsuka no nigiri kata* is one important way to keep the sword traveling straight. A correct grip, as previously described, with the hands close together and tightening inward as the sword swings downward, reduces the degree to which the blade can shift from side to side. To completely eliminate shimmy in the sword, be certain both hands swing in exactly the same line.

In addition to a proper grip and straight alignment of the hands while swinging the sword, the key to cutting technique is *enshin-ryoku*, or centripetal force. The Japanese *katana* is, without question, the finest sword ever produced by human hands. It was painstakingly designed to slice perfectly if swung correctly, so it is only necessary to guide the sword to the target and let it do the job for which it was designed!

By snapping the arms and wrists forward so they reach full extension just above the target, the *mono-uchi* (the cutting section) of the sword reaches a high velocity just before impact (Figure 7E-1). From there, the weight of the sword and its natural path of follow-through will cause it to slice effortlessly downward, finishing as shown in Figure 7E-2.

Figure 7E-1 Kirioroshi at Full Arm Extension (Point of Impact)

Figure 7E-2 Kirioroshi Completed

Figures 7E-3 through 7E-6 Half-Swing/Full-Swing Practice Exercise

A simple exercise for practicing correct cutting technique is to swing the sword in a half-cut, stopping at the point shown in Figure 7E-1, then raise the sword overhead again and make a full cut, finishing as shown in Figure 7E-2, as demonstrated above (Figures 7E-3 through 7E-6).

By repeating this half-swing/full-swing exercise, you will develop a habit of reaching full extension just above the target and allowing your arms to fall naturally to the finishing position. If your sword has a *shinogi* (blood groove), you will hear a loud and satisfying swoosh when you swing the blade correctly.

7F: CHIBURI

Blood Removal

At the completion of each *iaijutsu* technique, a movement is performed which is designed to remove the opponent's blood from the blade before it is resheathed. This movement is called *chiburi*, and there are three basic types: "wet umbrella," "flicking," and "dripping."

The type of *chiburi* most beginners will encounter first is the *kasa no shizuku o harao* (wet umbrella method), which gets its name from its resemblance to flinging the water from a wet umbrella. This style of *chiburi* is found in most of the *Seiza Waza*, the first techniques usually taught to beginners, and is also often called *"Ōmori-Ryū chiburi,"* since it is most commonly used in the *Ōmori-Ryū Waza* taught to beginners.

After completing *kirioroshi* (Figure 7F-1), the left hand releases the *tsuka*

Figures 7F-1 through 7F-12 Ōmori-Ryū Chiburi Front View

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Figures 7F-13 through 7F-22
Ōmori-Ryū Chiburi Side View

and the sword is drawn slowly to the right side, keeping the arm relatively straight and rotating the blade one-quarter turn clockwise so the edge is forward by the time the *kissaki* is pointing directly out from the right side, as shown in Figure 7F-4. The left hand simultaneously returns to the left hip, cradling the *koiguchi* in the web between the thumb and forefinger.

In a continuous motion, the sword is raised toward the head until the *tsuka* is directly in front of the forehead (see Figure 7F-7). The fingers grip the *tsuka* loosely, allowing the sword to tilt down, away, and behind the body at about a 45-degree angle.

From this point, the blade is swung counterclockwise, by suddenly clenching the right hand, which snaps it sharply downward, completing the motion as shown in Figures 7F-8 through 7F-11. The *kissaki* should finish a little outside the line of the right foot. The right hand should be about a foot ahead of the body and no more than a foot to the right of the right hip.

Finally, in most cases (but there are exceptions), the right foot is drawn back in preparation for nōtō (Figure 7F-12).

In the side view presented above, the posture and the position of the sword and right hand relative to the body can be more clearly seen.

7G: KATANA O KAESU

The most common type of *chiburi* in *Eishin-Ryū* is the *katana o kaesu* (the "flicking" method). This method is used in most of the *tatehiza* and *tachi-waza*, which are normally taught to intermediate and advanced students. It is also frequently referred to as *Eishin-Ryū chiburi*, since it was originated by Hasegawa Eishin when he adapted *iaijutsu* to the shorter swords of modern design.

At the completion of *kirioroshi*, the fingers of the left hand are loosened, with the exception of the little finger which remains hooked tightly around the *tsuka* (Figure 7G-1) while the right wrist begins to twist counterclockwise to create counterbalancing tension. With a snap of the wrist, the right hand twists the blade one-quarter turn counterclockwise on its longitudinal axis, while the hooked little finger of the left hand tugs in the opposite direction as the left hand pulls away (Figures 7G-2 through 7G-5). The sudden release of tension between the right and left hands causes the blade to snap sharply outward, flinging the blood away.

At the completion of this motion (Figure 7G-5), the right hand has snapped outward a few inches and is still level with its starting point, with the blade outside and roughly parallel to the line of the right leg. Due to the curvature of the sword, the *kissaki* is still directed somewhat toward the opponent. The left hand has darted back to the left hip and cradles the *koiguchi* in the web between the thumb and forefinger. *Eishin-Ryū chiburi* is performed in this identical manner when standing, as well.

Figures 7G-1 through 7G-5 Eishin-Ryū Chiburi

7H: CHI NO SHIZUKU O OTOSU

Chi no shizuku o otosu, the "dripping" method of *chiburi*, is used occasionally in both *seiza* and *tachiwaza*, and it is most likely to be the third type encountered by most students. In this method, after the completion of the final cut (Figure 7H-1), the blade is tilted to the right at about a 45-degree angle and the *mine* is rested against the right outer thigh as shown in Figures 7H-2 through 7H-4. To prepare for *nōtō*, the right hand is then reversed (Figures 7H-5 and 7H-6).

Figures 7H-1 through 7H-6
"Drip" Chiburi

7I: NŌTŌ

Resheathing

Nōtō is the act of returning the sword to its *saya* at the completion of a technique. Since *iaijutsu* always begins with the sword in its scabbard, no *waza* is truly completed until the sword has been resheathed so that another technique can be begun.

Nōtō begins at the point at which *chiburi* ends —regardless of which style of *chiburi* was used. There are three slight variations of *nōtō*: *Shōden, Chū den,* and *Okuden*, which are used in the *Shoden, Chūden* and *Okuden Waza*, respectively. When a *waza* concludes with either a "flicking" (as in Figure 7I-1) or "wet umbrella" (as in Figure 7I-2) *chiburi*, a *Shoden, Chūden,* or *Okuden nōtō* will follow, in accordance with the type of *waza* performed. However, the *nōtō* performed after a "drip" chiburi is a distinct variation.

Shoden Nōtō: While the sword is still positioned as shown in either Figure 7I-1 or 7I-2, the left hand envelopes the *koiguchi* so that the *koiguchi* itself is one-quarter to one-half inch inside the hand. Thus, the aperture between the thumb and forefinger form an extension of the *koiguchi*. This opening should be made as narrow as possible to ensure that the *kissaki* drops directly into the *koiguchi* during *nōtō*.

Once the left hand has grasped the *koiguchi* in this fashion, the blade is swung to the left side in a broad motion—almost exaggerated in *Shoden Waza*—and positioned edge-upward atop the left forearm (Figures 7I-3 through 7I-5, resting along the forearm from the crook of the elbow to the web between the thumb and index finger, as shown in Figure 7I-5.

The sword is then drawn forward with the *mine* sliding across the crease between the thumb and forefinger, while the left hand and left hip both pull simultaneously back, so that the right hand does not overextend in front of the body, causing an off-balanced posture. This motion should be timed so that just as the *saya* is tilted nearly vertical by the rearward motion of the left hand, the *kissaki* passes the web between the thumb and forefinger and drops into the *koiguchi* (see Figure 7I-6). At this point the motion of the two hands is reversed, so the left hand pushes the *saya* forward while the right hand pushes the sword inside and the hips return to their original position. This dual motion should be timed so that the *tsuba* meets the left hand directly in front of the navel about a foot away from the body,

Figures 7I-1 through 7I-11 Shoden Nōtō

Figures 7I-12 through 7I-15
Shoden Nōtō While Kneeling

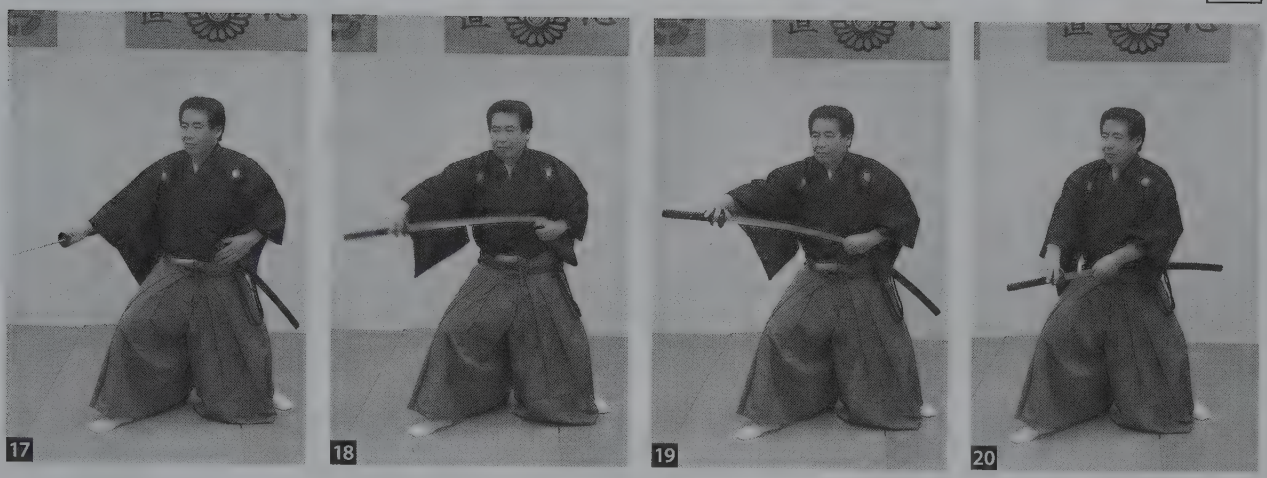
as shown in Figure 7I-10. Once the *habaki* has been fully inserted into the *saya*, the left thumb hooks over the tsuba to secure it in place (Figure 7I-11), then the right hand slides along the *tsuka* to the *tsuka-gashira*, where it remains until the very end of the *waza*.

In most of the *Shoden Waza*, the practitioner gradually lowers to one knee while performing *Shoden nōtō*, as depicted in Figures 7I-12 through 7I-15 below. This is done gradually, so that the *tsuba* touches the left hand at the *koiguchi* at the same moment the lowering knee touches the floor (Figure 7I-14).

Figure 7I-16 Intermediate Position for Chūden Nōtō

Chūden Nōtō: The same sequence of motions is performed in *Chūden nōtō*. They key difference is that, instead of placing the blade along the full length of the left forearm, as in *Shoden nōtō* (Figure 7I-5, above), and drawing nearly its full length forward, this portion of *nōtō* is foreshortened to reduce exposure to a secondary attack. Instead of taking the sword to the position shown in Figure 7I-5, it is taken to the position shown in Figure 7I-16 below, so that only about half the blade is drawn forward during *nōtō*. From there it is also drawn forward more rapidly than in *Shoden nōtō*, then slowly sheathed as before.

Okuden Nōtō: The sheathing is foreshortened and sped up even more in *Okuden nōtō*. Instead of slowly taking the sword to the position previously shown in Figure 7I-5 for *Shoden nōtō* or Figure 7I-16 for *Chūden nōtō*, it is



Figures 7I-17 through 7I-20
Okuden Nōtō

quickly taken to the position shown below in Figure 7I-18. From there it is drawn quickly forward until the *kissaki* drops into the *koiguchi* (Figure 7I-19), then about half the blade is quickly sheathed (reaching the position shown in Figure 7I-20) before slowly sheathing the remaining length of the blade. This action reduces exposure to secondary attack to an absolute minimum during *nōtō*, so it is most appropriate for advanced practitioners performing *Okuden Waza*.

7J: "DRIP" CHIBURI VARIATION

The final and most notable variation of *nōtō* is used in connection with the "drip" method of *chiburi*. This variation of *nōtō* begins after holding the position depicted in Figure 7J-1 for several seconds to represent most of the blood having dribbled from the blade.

Figure 7J-1 "Drip" Chiburi

The right hand is then inverted, so that it holds the *tsuka* palm-down, as shown in Figure 7J-2. The sword is then swung to the left side—again in an almost exaggerated motion as depicted in Figures 7J-3 through 7J-7—and positioned edge-upward along the left forearm from the crook of the elbow to the web between the thumb and index finger, this time with the right hand inverted from its normal *nōtō* position (see Figure 7J-8).

As the sword is drawn forward, with the *mine* sliding across the crease between the thumb and forefinger and the left hand pulling simultaneously back, the body turns about 45 degrees to the right. This motion should be timed so that just as the *saya* is tilted nearly vertical by the rear-

Figures 7J-2 through 7J-15
"Drip" Chiburi Variation of Nōtō

ward motion of the left hand and the *kissaki* drops into the *koiguchi*, the body is again facing directly forward, as shown in Figure 7J-10.

Again, the motion of the two hands is reversed at this point, although the right hand remains in an inverted position while the left hand pushes the *saya* forward and the right hand pushes the sword inside. This motion should also be timed so that the *tsuba* meets the left hand directly in front of the navel about a foot away from the body, as shown in Figure 7J-15. After the *habaki* has been fully inserted into the *saya*, the left thumb hooks

over the *tsuba* to secure it in place and the right hand slides along the *tsuka* to the *tsuka-gashira* just as in the other types of *nōtō*, remaining there until the very end of the *waza*.

Part II—General Principles

Like any art, *iaijutsu* is experiential by nature. Many elements of it simply cannot be understood except through practice and actually feeling and experiencing what is meant. Therefore, most attempts at explanation often sound at first like a *koan*, one of those annoying, self-contradictory parables for which *Zen* monks became famous. If you find any of these explanations frustrating in that way, we suggest that you simply try what is stated and keep the paradox in mind while you practice. With time, we are certain that you will come to experience and understand what we mean.

It is impossible to present the general principles outlined in this section in order of importance, since they are all of equal importance in terms of their contribution to effective *iaijutsu* technique. Nor can they be explained in order of use, since they all occur simultaneously during the performance of *iaijutsu waza*. Instead, we have tried to present them in the order in which they might naturally become apparent to the beginning *iaijutsu* student.

7K: SHISEI

Posture

Since each *iaijutsu* technique is begun by assuming a sitting, crouching, or standing posture, this subject is a logical starting point to review the general principles of *iaijutsu* technique.

The basic rule of posture is to remain erect and natural. For most of us, this is already a contradiction in terms, since slouching or slumping has become "natural" to us. The body must be held erect and alert, but this carriage must not be forced or artificial. The neck and back of the head should be in a straight line with the spinal column, but with the chin not tucked in. This is definitely a paradox, since the back of the head can-

Figure 7K-1 Seiza

Figure 7K-2 Tatehiza

Figure 7K-3 Tachi

not be truly straight unless the chin is, in fact, tucked in. Again, what is meant by this admonition is that a happy medium must be found, so that the head is held high with the neck and back straightly aligned, yet the chin is not tucked so far in as to cause a double or triple chin.

In the simplest terms it means to sit straight when sitting, and stand tall when standing. If you can do this and still remain relaxed, then you are on the right track. It is especially important for beginners to avoid muscle tension in the shoulders. In the awkwardness of trying to perform *iaijutsu* techniques the first several times, it is quite common to tense and raise the shoulders in an effort to maintain better control over the sword, which often seems to have developed a mind of its own. This tension will usually throw off the balance and cause the arms to swing unnaturally, robbing the body of power and causing the sword to shift while moving.

Until the basic movements of *iaijutsu* begin to feel natural and comfortable, it often helps to make a conscious effort at the beginning of every technique to relax and lower the shoulders.

This upright yet relaxed bearing is maintained in every aspect of *iaijutsu*, from the time you assume a preparatory position for performing a technique until you rest after completing the technique. Figure 7K-1 depicts correct posture while seated in the *seiza* position, Figure 7K-2 shows proper *tatehiza* (half-seated, half-kneeling; literally "upright-knee sitting"), and Figure 7K-3 represents standing posture.

As with nearly everything in *iaijutsu*, there is a prescribed method for taking a *seiza* (seated) or *tatehiza* (crouching) posture. These are presented in detail under the heading, *kamae*, later in this chapter.

Shisei is of greatest importance while you are moving during *iaijutsu waza*. Much of your power and correct cutting technique rely upon proper posture. Your balance also stems predominantly from correct posture.

An essential element in maintaining posture and balance while moving is *iaigoshi*, or *iai*-hips. *Iaigoshi* involves keeping the hips—and thus, the body's center of gravity—low while moving, not allowing the body to bob up and down as you step forward or back. At first, this will require conscious effort, and it will feel like you are trying to balance a glass of water on your head while you are moving.

It is important to maintain this upright alignment of back, neck, and head regardless of your stance. Whether you are seated, kneeling, crouching, standing upright, or lunging in to attack, both *iaigoshi* and straight spinal alignment must be maintained for optimum balance, speed, and power.

Try to avoid training in *shisei* only while performing *iaijutsu* techniques. Instead, if practiced from the moment you enter the *dōjō* to the moment you leave, proper posture will soon become habitual. With sufficient time and training, it will simply become your natural state, no longer requiring any conscious effort. You will have correct posture whether you are practicing *iaijutsu*, driving your car, or relaxing at home.

CHAKUGAN

Eye Contact

The next element you will probably become aware of is eye contact, called either *chakugan* or *metsuke* in Japanese. As soon as you try to draw a sword for the first time, you will find yourself wondering where to look: Should you watch your sword? Should you stare at your target? When you are looking at your opponent, should you look at his eyes? His hands? His feet?

As you might imagine, *chakugan* is crucial to *iaijutsu*. If a *samurai* failed to notice an opponent's attack, he met a sudden and premature end. If he was fooled by a feint, the result was the same.

There are as many theories about eye contact as there are schools of swordsmanship, and each theory has much merit. Some say to watch the opponent's eyes, but the eyes can often be used to deceive with a fake glance. Others advocate watching the opponent's hands, because the hands cannot lie. But a swordsman's hands can move so swiftly that by the time you notice them moving, it may be too late for a parry! Another idea is to watch the opponent's hips, since he cannot move without betraying it in his hips. Still others believe the opponent's elbows should be the focal point for the same reason. How can we possibly know which theory is right?

Eishin-Ryū is not concerned with which of these theories is right, because

it uses *enzan no metsuke* (distant mountain sight). By viewing the opponent with the same slightly out-of-focus eyesight we use when viewing a panorama of distant scenery, with the eyes directed at about the level of the adversary's solar plexus, our vision encompasses the entire person. In this way, we can watch our adversary's eyes, hands, elbows, hips, and feet all at the same time. This method also prevents us from being duped by an eye-fake or a distracting hand movement, because the positions of the hips, elbows, and feet will betray any deception attempted by the rest of the body. The *Eishin-Ryū* swordsman only reacts when the opponent's whole body reveals his true intentions.

When practicing without a partner, *enzan no metsuke* is performed by directing the line of sight toward a spot on the ground about fifteen to twenty feet away. This angle approximates the correct direction and focal length that would be used with an opponent.

KOKYŪ

Breath Control

The commencement of every *iaijutsu* technique is keyed to breathing, so *kokyū*, or breath control, will be another factor of immediate interest to anyone practicing the art.

At the beginning of each *waza*, after assuming the initial posture, take three breaths before moving. These three breaths should be natural but deep. The feeling should be as though the air is being drawn in through the nostrils up around the crown of the head, then down the spinal column to the *tanden*—(the lower abdomen). Exhaling is done normally. Of course, the air cannot actually follow this path. When inhaling, it goes straight down into the lungs as always. But by breathing with this circular feeling, the diaphragm draws air more deeply into the lungs, so breathing is more efficient. This type of breathing is called *fukushiki kokyū*.

As the third breath is drawn in, the initial movement of the *waza* is begun. If possible, the third breath should be held throughout the *waza*. However, in longer *waza* this is not always possible, especially for beginners. The objective in those cases is to breathe in such a way that the opponent cannot detect your breathing and exploit it. This involves breath-

ing soundlessly, and letting the breath fill the *tanden*, so there will not be any noticeable swelling of the chest cavity to alert an enemy to your breathing.

Although breath control is crucial for maximizing balance, power, and stamina while fighting, the most important aspect of breath control is mental, rather than physical. Physically, the act of breathing brings fresh, oxygen-rich air into the body as we inhale, and expels impure, carbon dioxide-laden air as we exhale. Thus, breathing serves to purify our bodies in the physical sense, so our goal in *iaijutsu* is to use our breathing to purify our minds at the same time.

A beginner does this by consciously "drinking in" positive thoughts and emotions while inhaling and releasing negative thoughts and emotions while exhaling. Negative thoughts and emotions, such as fear, worry, doubt, selfishness, jealousy, and hatred, are self-destructive and burdensome. Science has shown that excesses of these emotions are actually toxic to the body, leading to ulcers, higher incidence of cancer, impairment of the immune system, and susceptibility to disease. So it is quite beneficial—even necessary—to regularly cleanse the body and mind of these influences. But our minds cannot contain a vacuum. There is always something filling our thoughts. To truly drive out the destructive influences, we must replace them with positive thoughts. So, while we fill our lungs with fresh air, at the same time we fill our minds with refreshing feelings like confidence, faith, compassion, love, respect, and courage.

After a time of consciously practicing this mental cleansing, called *jaki o dasu* (expelling evil), it will become a habit. Once it has become habitual in *iaijutsu* practice, it will become part of our normal lifestyle, so that we are constantly refreshing and cleansing our mind and body as we go about our daily lives.

KAMAE

Stance

There are no stances in *iaijutsu*!

Despite this fact, *kamae*, or stance, is vital to correct technique. It is another of *iaijutsu's* infinite paradoxes that great emphasis is placed on

correct stance, or *kamae*, while at the same time it is also stressed that *iaijutsu* stances are all natural and therefore *kamae* is essentially nonexistent.

The most literal translation of *kamae* is "structure," although it is commonly rendered as "posture" or "stance." For purposes of *iaijutsu* practice, "body structure" may be the best way to conceptualize *kamae*, since it encompasses more than just the foot positions of "stance" or the bearing of "posture."

Although the *seiza* and *tatehiza* positions are not considered "stances" as such, we have included descriptions of them here, since they are the beginning positions for some thirty-five of the *waza* you will practice in *Eishin-Ryū*.

7L: SEIZA

Seiza (see Figure 7L-6) is the formal kneeling/seated position used during audiences with those of high rank, in tea ceremony, and in other similarly ritualistic or formal occasions.

Figures 7L-1 through 7L-6 Assuming Seiza Posture

To sit in *seiza* from a standing posture, first make sure that your left thumb is hooked over your *tsuba* to prevent your sword from unsheathing, then bend at the waist and knees and use your right hand to slap your *hakama* behind your left knee first (Figure 7L-2), then right knee (Figure 7L-3). This ensures that your *hakama* will not entangle your feet as you later attempt to rise. Continue squatting and place your left knee on the floor first (Figure 7L-4), then your right knee (Figure 7L-5). Flatten your feet against the floor with your big toes just touching, then sit down onto your heels.

Many students find *seiza* uncomfortable at first, but with a few weeks' training most find their knees and ankles adapting quite readily to it.

7M: TATEHIZA

Unlike *seiza*, *tatehiza* did not originate as a formal sitting position, but was the posture taken by *samurai* while relaxing. When you first experience the discomfort of *tatehiza*, you will find it difficult to imagine it as a way of resting. It is likely, however, that *tatehiza* was one of the few comfortable positions a *samurai* could assume while dressed in *yoroi*, the pleated bamboo battle armor, which may account for its common usage. *Tatehiza* is often considerably uncomfortable initially, especially for students who have not first become accustomed to *seiza*. It is also less familiar to many students, so it is presented below in both front (Figures 7M-1 through 7M-10) and side views (Figures 7M-11 through 7M-20).

To sit in *tatehiza* from a standing position, again make sure your thumb is controlling your *tsuba*, then bend at the knees and waist and use your

Figures 7M-1 through 7M-10 Assuming Tatehiza Posture (Front View)

Figures 7M-11 through 7M-20 Assuming Tatehiza Posture (Front View)

right hand to slap your *hakama* behind your left knee (Figures 7M-3 and 7M-13). Lower yourself onto your left knee (Figures 7M-4 and 7M-14), then move your right foot to the front (Figures 7M-5/6 and 7M-15/16). Now position your left foot beneath you on its side, so that the inner ankle-bone is centered under your body (Figures 7M-7 and 7M-17) and slap the right leg of your *hakama* behind your right knee. Next, draw your right foot back even with your left knee and sit down onto your left foot so that your behind is centered on your ankle-bone (Figures 7M-8/9 and 7M-18/19). Finally, straighten your back and rest your right wrist comfortably atop your right knee (Figures 7M-10 and 7M-20). You are now in the position commonly used by *samurai* to relax when off duty.

Shisei must also be erect while seated in *tatehiza*, as shown in Figure 7M-10. For most Westerners, there is a tendency to lean forward to alleviate some of the weight from the left ankle to ease the discomfort of *tatehiza*, so be sure to keep the line from your buttocks to your head as straight as possi-

ble. At first you may also feel as if your balance is precarious in *tatehiza* and be tempted to tense your upper body to remain erect, so you must make a conscious effort to keep your shoulders and upper body relaxed.

7N: STANDING POSTURES

Another reason we can say that *iaijutsu* has no stances is that the standing postures used in *iaijutsu* are all identical to those used in the related art of *kenjutsu*, so we utilize the same descriptive terms for them. It should be remembered, however, that different styles do occasionally use different terms for these stances or postures, as well will attempt to note.

Probably the most basic and universal stance is the one we will typically call *Seigan no Kamae.* Some styles refer to it as *Chūdan no Kamae* (mid-level stance), but we use the term *Seigan no Kamae* for this posture, since *"Seigan"* (straight at the eyes) accurately describes pointing the *kissaki* directly at the opponent's eyes. Another term occasionally used is *Hito no Kamae* (person stance).

Figure 7N-1 Seigan no Kamae (Front View)

In *Seigan no Kamae*, the feet are kept shoulder-width apart, separated back-to-front by the distance of a medium stride, with the front knee bent so the shin is vertical. The heel of the back foot is slightly raised (or only lightly touching the floor) and the back knee is slightly bent. When using *Seigan no Kamae*, the right foot is almost always kept in front (See Figures 7N-1 and 7N-2).

Figure 7N-2 Seigan no Kamae (Side View)

In *Seigan no Kamae*, the hands grip the *tsuka* at the natural level about navel-high, with the blade angled upward so the *kissaki* points at the opponent's eyes (or where the opponent's eyes would be, if he were standing at neutral distance). *Seigan no Kamae* is a neutral stance that can be used with equal effectiveness for either attack or defense. Of the various defensive postures, *seigan* is the safest, since a defense against any kind of attack can be initiated from it.

Jōdan no Kamae (high-level stance) is an attacking stance. It is sometimes called *Ten no Kamae* (heaven stance), because the sword is held overhead. It is also referred to as *Hi no Kamae* (fire stance), because your fighting spirit must be so strong and evident that it nearly "burns" the opponent,

Figure 7N-3 Jōdan no Kamae (Front View)

Figure 7N-4 Jōdan no Kamae (Side View)

oppressing his spirit and resolve. Without such strong spirit behind it, *Jōdan no Kamae* is merely a weak and dangerously exposed posture.

The foot position for *Jōdan no Kamae* is a little taller than that for *Seigan*, and the *left* foot is usually kept forward. The position of the feet is more akin to the *hanmi dachi* of *aikidō* or *kendō*, with the rear foot pointed outward (60 to 75 degrees to facilitate driving forward from the ball of the foot), both knees comfortably flexed, and the feet spread about the distance of a normal walking step. In *iaijutsu*, we usually refer to this posture as *shizentai* (natural stance).

The sword is held directly overhead with the blade either level or the *kissaki* a little higher than the *tsuba*. The top of the left (front) hand should be in line with the plane of the face, and the elbows spread to a natural width, just wide enough to allow unobstructed forward vision. In *samurai* movies, you may see the elbows pulled quite wide, but this is done for cinematic effect only, and should not be practiced in the *dōjō*. Figures 7N-3 and 7N-4 show *Jōdan no Kamae*.

Gedan no Kamae (low-level stance) is considered a defensive stance, and for this reason it is sometimes called *Shubi no Kamae* (defense stance) or *Chi no Kamae* (earth stance) because the sword is pointed toward the ground (Figure 7N-5). However, *Gedan* is far from the neutral, guarded posture that is *Seigan*. Instead, by deliberately exposing the head and upper body, *Gedan* is actually an invitation to attack, especially when the opponent is standing in *Jōdan*. If a *kiriageru* (upward cut) is initiated from *Gedan*, it is impossible for an opponent in *Jōdan* to block it in time. Yet if the opponent responds to this threat with an attack, it can be readily be blocked or counterattacked from *Gedan*.

The overall posture of *Gedan no Kamae* is the same *shizentai* as that for *Jōdan*, except that the sword is pointed downward with the cutting edge turned toward the opponent and the stance is usually right foot forward.

Figure 7N-5 Gedan no Kamae (Front View)

Figure 7N-6 Gedan no Kamae (Side View)

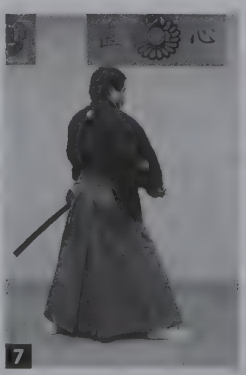


Figure 7N-7 Gedan no Kamae (Reverse Angle Side View)

Another common stance using *shizentai* is *Hassō no Kamae* (eight-phase stance), sometimes called *Kanshi no Kamae* (watching stance), which is essentially a neutral stance although it bears the appearance of an attacking posture. *Hassō* is a versatile posture, from which you can easily shift to *Jōdan* or *Seigan*, as well as directly attack or defend (see Figures 7N-8 and 7N-9). Another name sometimes applied to *Hassō* is *In no Kamae*, *"in"* being the Japanese word for the better-known Chinese concept of *yin*—the passive, yielding component of *yin* and *yang*. —It should be noted that in some styles *In no Kamae* is different from *Hassō*.

Figure 7N-8 Hassō no Kamae (Front View)

Hassō no Kamae again uses the same *shizentai* as that for *Jōdan* and *Gedan*, except that the sword is held high at the side of the body and pointed upward. The natural gripping position of the hands should cause the blade to be angled back about 45 degrees. The elbows should be held naturally, as if the sword were suspended in air and your arms hanging from it. The *tsuba* should be about the level of your jaw, about four to six inches from your cheek.

Figure 7N-9 Hassō no Kamae (Side View)

Waki no Kamae (Figures 7N-10 and 7N-11) is also sometimes called *Kanshi no Kamae* because it is also a neutral or "watching" stance. The name is sometimes shortened to *wakigamae*. Occasionally, it is referred to as *Yō no Kamae*, the *Yō* being the *yang* to *Hassō*'s *yin*, since it is more overtly aggressive in nature and appearance. In *Waki no Kamae*, the feet are spread wider than the stances previously described—a long stride or nearly twice shoulder width apart—with the front knee bent severely to make the stance low and stable. The sword is held at the rear hip with the edge facing outward and blade slanting down to the rear alongside (*Waki*) the body. This is by no means a defensive posture, since the sword is not in a position to readily guard. Instead, the position of the sword is hidden from the opponent's view, making it harder for him to judge its reach. This uncertainty, if coupled with strong fighting spirit (see *kihaku* later in this chapter) as in *Jōdan no Kamae*, puts tremendous pressure on the opponent.

Figure 7N-10 Waki no Kamae (Front View)

Figure 7N-11 Waki no Kamae (Side View)

Figure 7N-12 Chūdan no Kasumi (Front View)

Figure 7N-13 Chūdan no Kasumi (Side View)

Chūdan no Kasumi (middle-level haze) is something of a hybrid, combing elements of both *Gedan no Kamae* and *Seigan no Kamae*. It utilizes the same wide stance as *Waki no Kamae* and the angular sword position of *Gedan no Kamae*, but keeps the *kissaki* pointed at the opponent's eyes like *Seigan no Kamae*. It is a versatile stance since both attack and defense can readily be initiated from it. It lends itself naturally to a thrusting attack, yet the hands can easily shift to *furikaburi* for a *kirioroshi* (downward) or *kesagiri* (diagonal) cut. The power and versatility of this stance make it extremely intimidating.

MAAI

Distance

As soon as you begin to draw your sword for the first time, you will become aware of the concept of distance. Obviously, controlling the distance between yourself and your opponent is of life-or-death importance in *iaijutsu*.

Generally, your starting position should be the distance from which you can correctly strike the opponent by taking one full step forward. This places you out of the adversary's reach unless he takes such a step. If you are too close, you are obviously in danger, and if you are too far away, your opponent will see and deflect your attack too easily. Due to differences in body size, arm length, and speed of motion, correct *maai* varies for everyone.

To determine this safe starting distance, you must work backward from the correct attacking distance; and to determine the correct attacking distance, you must first understand how to strike with the sword. The cutting area of the blade is not the middle, as many novices suppose, and it is certainly not the portion closest to the *tsuba*. The striking area, called the *monouchi*, is the one-third of the blade (approximately ten inches) closest to the *kissaki* (Figure 7O-1).

If you remember that the cutting ability of the blade comes from *enshin ryoku* (centripetal force) rather than muscle strength, this is easier to understand. The closer to the *kissaki*, the faster the blade is moving at the time of impact, the more striking power it has. Since the blade must slice—not

hit—the target, enough blade must be employed to cut deeply. The balance of speed and slicing depth predicates the ideal location of the *monouchi* as the one-third of the blade nearest the *kissaki*. In actuality, the *monouchi* is not the entire last one-third of the blade, since the last three or four inches are susceptible to breaking. The area indicated in Figure 7O-1 which does not include those last few inches.

Figure 70-1 Monouchi

Thus, *kirima*—the correct distance from which to effectively cut—is the distance at which, when swung naturally and correctly, the *monouchi* will strike the target at the precise instant immediately after the arms reach their full extension. The correct starting distance is determined by taking one large or lunging step backward from the striking distance.

Obviously, both the starting distance and striking distance will vary individually, depending upon your height and the reach of your arms while swinging the sword, the distance you cover in one stride, and the speed at which you can close that distance. It is therefore something you will learn and determine through practice and develop a feel for as your experience grows.

The final and perhaps most important distance involved in *iaijutsu* is that by which the opponent's blade should miss you during an attempted attack. This distance determines how far you move when evading an adversary's strike. It is important to dodge an opponent's strike so that it misses by just the slightest margin. If you move too far out of an opponent's reach, you will also have moved out of counterattacking range, so it is crucial to practice this aspect of *maai* diligently.

The Japanese say, *Issun no maai o mikiru*, which means to ascertain a distance of one inch. This entails observing the opponent's attack to determine how close his attacking momentum will carry him and how far his sword will reach toward his intended target. If you can cause your opponent to miss by just one inch, then you are well within counterattacking range immediately afterward.

To attain skill in judging the opponent's striking distance demands countless hours of training in the *dōjō*. By trial and error—often painful error—you will eventually be able to instinctively retreat just a hairsbreadth beyond an attacker's reach, and in a single fluid motion step in for a counterattack which is both too quick for your adversary to block and too close for him to avoid. The highest ideal of this *maai* is sometimes called *kami hitoe*—the thickness of a single sheet of paper—in which the opponent's sword would cut your garment but not quite graze your skin. If you reach this level of skill, you have truly mastered *maai*.

KIHAKU

Intensity

It is axiomatic that *iaijutsu* techniques executed with insufficient power and focus will be ineffective. However, as we have previously mentioned, power involves far more than simply applying muscle strength. In fact, muscle strength will often thwart the *iaijutsu* student who is attempting a powerful cutting technique. From the physical point of view, *te no uchi*, the subtleties of technique, will provide far more cutting power than sheer muscle strength.

But power is more than simply good technique. The driving force behind a truly powerful technique is predominantly mental. It comes from developing a single-minded focus and intensity the Japanese call *kihaku*.

Kihaku is a combination of several mental factors, including self-confidence, determination, *shinnen* (belief in the cause for which we are fighting), and all-out commitment. It stems from an unremitting resolve not to lose. As we explained in detail in Chapter 2, we are more likely to achieve a victory if you are determined not to lose rather than trying to win. Thus, the best way for a martial artist to win is simply not to lose!

If we focus on winning, we place an expectation on ourselves that can induce unnecessary tension. The desire to win also tends to make us the aggressor, and this aggressiveness can easily lead to mistakes in our efforts to win. Conversely, if our sole objective is not to lose, we can unleash an indomitable spirit that is unencumbered by anxiety, heroic expectations, and the pressure to succeed. Instead, our mind and body are free to react nat-

urally and instinctively to our opponent—guided by our training—and with this kind of *kihaku* we are more likely to prevail.

These factors, in fact, all work together. If we have trained arduously, we can have justifiable faith in our physical ability. Based on this self-confidence, we can make the determination not to lose the battle we are facing. And knowing that we are fighting out of sincere and right motives for a just cause, we can make an all-out commitment to the battle without the slightest hesitation or reservation. This unrestrained fighting spirit—*kihaku*—then becomes the driving force behind the physical techniques.

Kihaku manifests itself in the dignity with which we conduct ourselves, knowing our cause to be just, *kibi-kibi to shita dōsa* (the intensity with which we move), and the *kokoro no koma* (sincerity of heart) which is evident in our respect and poise. These are the qualities which set apart the advanced *iaijutsu* practitioner from the beginning student.

ZANSHIN

Warrior Spirit

Zanshin is a term which appears to be unique to the Japanese language; there is certainly no adequate translation of it in English. Taken literally, it means "remaining spirit," "leftover spirit," or "excess spirit," but it is usually explained as "leaving your spirit focused on the opponent." None of these terms does *zanshin* justice, however. Unfortunately, there is no easy way to define or explain *zanshin*. It is simply a state of mind that must be experienced to be understood. And once understood, it defies accurate description.

Warrior spirit may be the easiest way for Westerners to conceptualize *zanshin*. It is a complex state of mind that encompasses indomitable will—the will not to lose we have explained earlier—a projection of fighting spirit that should be almost palpable to the opponent, mental and physical readiness to respond to attack, and an intense state of alertness, all of which are tempered with a complete lack of fear, worry, excitement, or tension. *Zanshin* is almost a paradox in itself, since it combines the fiercest possible fighting spirit with the calm peace-of-mind of *heijōshin*.

When practicing *iaijutsu* technique, *zanshin* should arise as you begin inhaling your *kokyū* cleansing breaths. This would correspond to the moment a threat is perceived. This intense state of mind then continues throughout *nukitsuke*, *kirioroshi*, *chiburi*, and even *nōtō*. In fact, by its very nature, *nōtō* is one of the most crucial times in which to retain *zanshin*. It is natural for almost anyone to maintain fighting spirit while drawing the sword, blocking a strike, or cutting. But one of the most vulnerable moments for the *samurai* is when the battle appears to be over and the sword is being resheathed. The best time for a wounded opponent to make a dying effort to defeat you is at the midpoint of *nōtō*, the point at which the *kissaki* is just entering the *koiguchi*. From this point, you cannot draw with any power or effect, but you do not have time to complete *nōtō* and draw again. So *chiburi* and *nōtō* are the times when your *zanshin* should be most evident.

When the *tsuba* first contacts the left hand, there should still be a very strong sense of your *zanshin*, since your sword is still not completely in the *saya*. As a practical matter, you would not fully close the *tsuba* against the *saya*, wedging the *habaki* tightly into the *koiguchi* where it will be difficult to redraw, until you were certain your opponent was finished. Your *zanshin* should continue, just as evident as at the height of battle, until your right hand is removed from the *tsuka-gashira* at the end of the *waza*.

It is probably because so much attention is paid to *zanshin* after the opponent has been defeated that many people have the misconception that the "remaining spirit" of *zanshin* refers only to the martial spirit which is remaining *after* the fight. Although *zanshin* is most noticeable during *chiburi* and *nōtō*—that is, "after the fight"—it must be present from the moment the technique begins.

Just as there is no simple way to describe this state, there is no simple way to learn *zanshin*. It is a state of mind that can only be developed by dedicated training. It may have been easier for the *samurai* of old to practice *zanshin*, because there was the very real and imminent possibility that his training would be put to the test with his life at stake. For the modern *iaidōka*, however, it takes a bit of imagination to develop *zanshin*.

Visualization helps many people practice and develop their fighting spirit. By imagining that you are actually facing an opponent while per-

forming *iaijutsu* techniques, you can more readily enter a mental state of alert concentration. By pretending that your life is at stake you can imitate the fierce resolve and willpower necessary to win the imaginary battle. And if you finish each *waza* anticipating that your defeated foe might spring up for one final attack or that another enemy might be lurking nearby just waiting for a lapse in your concentration to attack, you can more easily practice that state of calm yet wary preparedness that is *zanshin*. Also, it is a mistake to limit the focus of *zanshin* to the most recently defeated opponent. A correctly executed *kirioroshi* will have assured that your last opponent poses no further threat, and your *waza* is not truly complete unless it contained a properly performed *kirioroshi*. So, instead of fixing your gaze where your last opponent would now lie during *chiburi* and *nōtō*, it is preferable to return your gaze to *enzan no metsuke* as you perform *chiburi* and *nōtō*, while maintaining intense *zanshin*. If, in fact, another adversary is lurking nearby at this point, the intensity of your *zanshin* alone should wither his spirit and prevent his attack.

Zanshin would hardly qualify as an aspect of *iaijutsu* if it did not have a somewhat paradoxical nature—fortunately, zanshin readily meets this criterion. As already mentioned, *zanshin* literally means "remaining spirit," and is often associated with the warrior spirit remaining after combat, yet it is to be present at all times, before, during, and after the battle. On the other hand, the Japanese have a saying, *Meijin ni zanshin nashi:* The master of masters needs no *zanshin*. This suggests that at the highest levels of training, you no longer exhibit *zanshin*.

What this really means is that the highly advanced master has so much *zanshin* active every moment of his or her life—even during sleep—that to the untrained eye it appears that *zanshin* is absent. Instead, however, what is absent is not *zanshin*, but the lack of *zanshin*, so that in such a master there is no noticeable difference between being at rest or at the peak of mortal combat.

A final word about *zanshin* is that it underlies every other aspect of *iaijutsu*. It is the driving force behind all of the physical techniques. Its courage is manifest in the erect posture of *shisei*. It is the nearly palpable resolve-crushing spirit evident in *kamae*. It shines from the eyes to challenge the opponent in *chakugan*. It energizes every breath in *kokyū*. It emboldens

the *samurai* to maintain correct, opponent-pressuring *maai*. And it provides the ferocious, singleminded focus of *kihaku*.

MACHIGAI

Mistakes

In *iaijutsu*, a confrontation ends in the blink of an eye and one of the combatants lies dead on the ground. The *samurai* could not afford to make a mistake. Mistakes, very simply, meant death.

On the other hand, the only way to learn an art as difficult and complex as *iaijutsu* is to make mistakes. So in one respect you must train with an intensity of *kihaku* as if there were no room for mistakes—as if they would be fatal—while in another respect, you must accept the fact that mistakes are a normal part of the learning process.

It is important, therefore, not to dwell on your mistakes, whether they are simply training errors in the *dōjō* or mistakes that have a serious impact in your life. If you allow errors in your past to affect your future attempts, at the very least you will find yourself losing confidence and going into a slump. At the worst, you can become so paralyzed by the fear of failure that you will no longer even try!

Furthermore, your mind will inevitably try to achieve whatever you visualize. So if you keep visualizing yourself making that same old mistake over and over, you are effectively programming your subconscious to repeat it.

Instead, pay attention to your mistakes without dwelling on them. Try to determine what caused the error and how it can be corrected or avoided in the future, then *visualize yourself acting correctly*. In this way, rather than being a setback or hindrance, each mistake becomes an investment in your future success.

Remember, too, that it is far better to have tried and failed—and learned from the experience—than never to have tried, never to have learned, and never to have truly lived!

初伝正座

Chapter 8

Ōmori-Ryū Seiza Waza

Shoden Waza

Originally, *Hayashizaki-Ryū*, and subsequently *Eishin-Ryū*, *iaijutsu* consisted only of techniques performed from the *tatehiza* (crouching) and *tachiwaza* (standing) positions. However, with the establishment of the Tokugawa Shōgunate in 1603, the status of the *samurai* class was further elevated, making it essential that techniques be devised to address situations which might arise during occasions of great formality or courtly ritual.

A seventeenth-century *tatsujin* (expert) in *Shinkage-Ryū Kenjutsu*, Ōmori Rokurōzaemon, combined five *kenjutsu katachi* (formal partner exercises) and *battōjutsu* (sword drawing techniques) with the social rituals of *Ogasawara-Ryū Seiza Reihō* (the etiquette of tea ceremonies) to create a series of formal *Seiza Waza*, which begin in this traditional Japanese kneeling/ seated position. The ninth-generation grandmaster of *Eishin-Ryū*, Hayashi Rokudayū, also studied *kenjutsu* under Ōmori Rokurōzaemon and incorporated these *Seiza Waza* into *Eishin-Ryū Iaijutsu*. In recognition of their origin, these *waza* are known as the *Shoden Ōmori-Ryū Seiza Waza*.

We often explain the term *Shoden* as "initial level." The Japanese word *den*, however, carries a much deeper and more interesting meaning than simply "level" or "stage." It is a complex concept with no single-word equivalent in English which does it justice. In essence, *den* is the process of personally passing knowledge and information from one generation to the next in parental fashion. Even "heritage," "transmission," or "legacy," at least in their current usage, fail to impart the richness of nuance that we find in *den*.

The *Ōmori-Ryū Seiza Waza* are normally the first *waza* taught to beginning *iaijutsu* students, probably because so many of them are merely variations and practical applications of *iaijutsu* fundamentals.

Prior to the succession of the seventeenth grandmaster, Ōe Masamichi, all but one of the *Shoden Waza* bore names different from those by which they are presently known in *Eishin-Ryū*, as shown below:

Present Name	Previous Name
1. *Mae*	*Shohattō* (First Draw)
2. *Migi*	*Satō* (Left Sword)
3. *Hidari*	*Utō* (Right Sword)
4. *Ushiro*	*Atari-tō* (Striking Sword)
5. *Yaegaki*	*Inyō Shintai* (Yin-Yang Mind and Body)
6. *Ukenagashi*	*Ryū tō* (Flowing Sword)
7. *Kaishaku*	*Juntō* (Assisting Sword)
8. *Tsukekomi*	*Gyakutō* (Reverse Sword)
9. *Tsukikage*	*Shinchūtō* (True-Motives Sword)
10. *Oikaze*	*Korantō* (Running Tiger Sword)
11. *Nukiuchi*	*Nukiuchi* (Sudden Attack)

A notable feature of the *Shoden Waza* is the use of the *Ōmori-Ryū*, or "wet umbrella," *chiburi*. Reread the detailed description of this *chiburi* in Chapter 7, and practice it several times until you can perform it smoothly and without major noticeable flaws before practicing the *waza* in this chapter.

Another characteristic of this group of *waza* is the *Shoden*-type *nōtō*, also described in detail in Chapter 7. This style of *nōtō* features broad, gracefully unhurried sweeping motions of the sword.

Please review all of the fundamentals in Chapter 7 in order to be able to readily follow the descriptions of *waza* in this chapter, since they are presented in much less detail here.

8A: MAE

Front

Figure 8A-1 Ōmori-Ryū Seiza Waza: Mae

The first *waza*, *Mae* (front) or *Seiza Mae*, contains all the major elements of *kihon* in their most basic form, as described in Chapter 7: *nukitsuke, furikaburi, kirioroshi, chiburi,* and *nōtō*. The simplicity of this *waza* is deceptive: while it is the easiest *waza* to learn and perform, it takes true mastery to perform it with the necessary power and precision.

Mae begins facing straight ahead in *Seiza* posture (Figure 8A-1) while taking three preparatory breaths. You are facing a single opponent, who is also seated directly in front of you. As you finish inhaling the third time, you sense his intention to attack.

Perform *koiguchi no kirikata* and begin *nukitsuke* as you rise on your knees. It is essential in all *Seiza Waza* that you rise onto the balls of your feet as you begin to rise from *seiza*. If your toes remain flat on the floor, you will be unable to push forward with your rear foot. Step forward with your right foot, still kneeling on your left knee and complete *nukitsuke* at your shoulder level (opponent's eye level in *seiza*). Perform *furikaburi* while remaining on one knee. To increase the power of *kirioroshi*, shuffle forward during the cut by pushing with the left foot while stepping farther forward with the right foot, then allowing the left foot to slide forward so that it resumes the same spacing as before. This shuffle should draw you forward some six to twelve inches during *kirioroshi*. Follow *kirioroshi* with *Ōmori-Ryū* (wet umbrella) *chiburi*, rising to your feet by pushing up with both feet and drawing your left foot forward, even with the right. It is not necessary to reach full standing posture at the exact moment the sword completes *chiburi*. Usually, the sword finishes *chiburi* just a moment before you fully rise. Also remember to remain in *iaigoshi* when rising. While maintaining *zanshin*, slide your right foot slowly back, then perform *Shoden nōtō* while gradually lowering onto your left knee. In all *Seiza Waza*, time this movement so that your right knee touches the floor at the exact moment the *tsuba* touches your left hand at the *koiguchi*. Hook your left thumb over the *tsuba*, then slide your right hand to the *tsukagashira*, and rise to a standing position. Still maintaining *zanshin*, take two

steps back to reach your original starting position. At this point, now standing fully erect, remove your right hand from the *tsuka-gashira* and return it to your right side while your left hand releases the *saya* and *tsuba* and returns to your left side.

Figures 8A-2 through 8A-21 Ōmori-Ryū Seiza Waza: Mae

8B: MIGI

Right

The second *waza*, *Migi* (right) is nearly identical to *Mae*, except that it begins turned 90 degrees to the right-front, and therefore includes a 90-degree turn to the left during *nukitsuke*. As a result, *nukitsuke* ends with the left foot forward and the foot positions are the mirror-image of those in *Mae*. Earlier this *waza* was called *Satō* (left sword) because of this initial pivot, but the name was subsequently changed to *Migi* because it was less confusing to students to name it for its starting orientation.

Begin by turning 90 degrees to your right as you assume the initial *seiza* posture (Figure 8B-1), then take the three preparatory breaths. As you begin your third breath, you sense the the intention of the person seated on your left to attack.

Perform *nukitsuke,* pivoting 90 degrees to your left as you rise and step forward with your left foot. Follow with *furikaburi* and *kirioroshi*, just as in *Mae*, but with your foot positions reversed. *Chiburi* and *nōtō* will also be the mirror-image of *Mae*, followed by a rise to a standing position with *iaigoshi* and then a return to your starting position while maintaining *zanshin*.

Figures 8B-1 through 8B-19 Ōmori-Ryū Seiza Waza: Migi

8C: HIDARI

The third *waza*, *Hidari* (left) is the mirror-image of *Migi*, and the movements are nearly identical to *Mae*, except that it begins turned 90 degrees to the left-front (as shown in Figure 8C-1). Therefore, it begins with a 90-degree turn to the right during *nukitsuke*. Earlier this *waza* was called *Utō* (right sword) because of this initial pivot, but the name was subsequently changed to *Hidari*, again because it was less confusing to students to name it for the starting direction.

Begin by turning 90 degrees to your left as you take the initial *seiza* posture and begin *kokyū* cleansing breaths. As you inhale the third time, you sense the intention of the person on your right to attack.

Perform *nukitsuke*, pivoting 90 degrees to your right as you rise and stepping forward with your right foot. From this point, the *waza* is performed exactly the same as *Mae*, with *furikaburi*, *kirioroshi*, *Ōmori-Ryū chiburi*, and *Shoden nōtō* while lowering onto your left knee. After securing the *tsuba* with your left thumb, slide your right hand to the *tsuka-gashira*, rise, and step back to your original starting position.

Figures 8C-1 through 8C-19 Ōmori-Ryū Seiza Waza: Hidari

Figures 8D-1 through 8D-17 Ōmori-Ryū Seiza Waza: Ushiro

8D: USHIRO

Rear

Ushiro (rear) is the fourth in the initial series of *waza*, completing the four possible directions of attack, so it begins facing rearward from your original orientation (Figure 8D-1).

Take the three cleansing breaths while in this rear-facing *seiza* posture. As you take in your third cleansing breath, you sense the intention of someone directly behind you to attack.

Pivot 180 degrees to your left as you perform *nukitsuke*, finishing left foot forward. For beginners it is acceptable to swing both feet 30 to 45 degrees to the right to initiate this turn, but advanced students should do so without this assistance (as shown in Figure 8D-2). From there, exactly as in *Migi*, perform *furikaburi*, *kirioroshi*, and *chiburi*, followed by *Shoden nōtō* while lowering onto your left knee. Rise to a standing position, then take two steps back to your original starting point and place your hands at your sides.

8E: YAEGAKI

Barriers within Barriers

The fifth *waza*, *Yaegaki* displays an increased level of complexity over the first four *Shoden Waza*. In addition, there are two similar but distinct versions of *Yaegaki*: *Omote* and *Ura*.

The nuances of *Omote* and *Ura* are difficult to translate into simple terms. As a general rule, *Omote* and *Ura* denote opposite sides of the same object, such as the "head" and "tails" of a coin, or the two sides of a door. This meaning carries with it the notion of one side being readily visible, and the other side being hidden from view. So while we use the simple translation of "front" and "back" for *Omote* and *Ura*, it might as well be "apparent" and "hidden," or any number of similar meanings.

Figures 8F-1 through 8F-20 Ōmori-Ryū Seiza Waza: Yaegaki Omote

8F: YAEGAKI OMOTE

Front

Yaegaki Omote begins facing straight ahead in *seiza* position (Figure 8F-1), exactly as in *Mae*. As you inhale the third cleansing breath, you sense the intent of the person in front of you to attack.

Rising to one knee, exactly as in *Mae*, perform *nukitsuke*, ending with your right forward. Rise almost to a fully standing position during *furi-kaburi*, stepping forward with your left foot, then dropping back to one knee while performing *kirioroshi*. Perform *Eishin-Ryū* (Flick) *chiburi*. While performing *Shoden nōtō*, slide your left foot backward at the same pace the sword is entering the *saya*, until about two-thirds of the blade is sheathed, as depicted in Figure 8F-6. Begin to rise while drawing the sword at a slight downward angle as shown in Figure 8F-7, and finish using the *mine* (back of the blade) to guard in front of your right leg as shown in Figure 8F-8. Drop to one knee with your right foot forward (Figure 8F-9) during *furi-kaburi*. With the same lunging shuffle as in *Mae*, perform *kirioroshi*. This time, follow with *Ōmori-Ryū chiburi*, rise, slide your right foot back, and finish with *Shoden nōtō*. At the completion of the *waza*, rise to your feet (remaining in *iaigoshi*), then step three steps back to your starting place and return your hands to your sides.

The basic *bunkai* (practical application) of *Yaegaki Omote* is a defense against a single attacker directly in front of you. As with *Mae*, *nukitsuke* and *kirioroshi* are used to first blind, then finish, this opponent. However, if the opponent is able to evade the brunt of your first *kirioroshi* and play possum until you are vulnerable during *nōtō*, making a surprise attempt

Figures 8F-21 through 8F-25 Ōmori-Ryū Seiza Waza: Yaegaki Omote

Figures 8G-1 through 8G-20 Ōmori-Ryū Seiza Waza: Yaegaki Ura

to sever your right leg, you can use the second *nukitsuke* to block this slash to the leg and a second *kirioroshi* to be certain he will not make another such attempt.

8G: YAEGAKI URA

Back

Yaegaki Ura begins facing straight ahead in seiza position (Figure 8G-1), just as in *Yaegaki Omote*. This *waza* is identical in every respect to *Yaegaki Omote*, except that rather than blocking an attempted cut to the leg on the second *nukitsuke* as shown in Figure 8F-14 above, in *Ura*, *nukitsuke* cuts horizontally at shoulder level (Figure 8G-14, opposite).

From this point, *Yaegaki Ura* continues in exactly the same manner as *Yaegaki Omote*, by dropping to one knee during *furikaburi*, shuffling forward *kirioroshi*, then *Ōmori-Ryū chiburi*, rise to *iaigoshi* standing height, sliding the right foot back, and finishing with *Shoden nōtō*. At the completion of the *waza*, you rise to your feet (again remaining in *iaigoshi*) and take three steps back to your initial position.

The *bunkai* for *Yaegaki Ura* is essentially the same as that of *Omote*, except that a second attacker appears from *ura* (concealment behind the first). Thus, the second *nukitsuke* and *kirioroshi* are identical to the first set.

Figures 8G-21 through 8G-25 Ōmori-Ryū Seiza Waza: Yaegaki Ura

8H: UKENAGASHI

Flowing Block

Since *Yaegaki Omote* and *Ura* are considered variations of the same technique, *Ukenagashi* is considered to be the sixth *waza* of the *Shoden* series.

Ukenagashi begins in *seiza*, facing 45 degrees to the front-right, as shown in Figure 8H-1. In this *waza*, your opponent is to your left with his sword already drawn and about to attack.

As you inhale the final cleansing breath, look 45 degrees to your left and perform *koiguchi no kirikata*. Begin to rise, stepping forward with your left foot as you draw about one-third to one-half of the sword (Figure 8H-2). This makes you appear vulnerable and precipitates the opponent's strike. Rise to a standing position (with *iaigoshi*) as you complete *nukitsuke*, drawing the sword overhead, with the *kissaki* angled downward to your left as shown in Figure 8H-3, which will cause the opponent's strike to slide down the slope of your sword to your left. In a continuously flowing movement, twist your body 90 degrees to your left without moving your feet, and perform a one-handed *furikaburi* (Figure 8H-4), then lift your left foot (Figure 8H-5) and lunge toward the attacker with *kirioroshi* (moving your left foot first, then your right foot) bringing your feet together while maintaining *iaigoshi* (Figure 8H-6 through 8H-8). With *zanshin*, step back with your left foot into a wide stance, with both knees bent for stability, and perform "drip" *chiburi*. Conclude with the *nōtō*, so that you finish facing front, rise in *iaigoshi* while maintaining *zanshin*, and step back to the starting position.

Ukenagashi means "flowing parry," which is the trademark technique of this *waza*. In application, the force of the opponent's *kirioroshi* striking your blade facilitates your counteract. In addition, the opponent is momentarily off-balanced when his attack fails to meet resistance. These two factors assure your victory.

Figures 8H-1 through 8H-20 Ōmori-Ryū Seiza Waza: Ukenagashi

Figures 8I-1 through 8I-16 Ōmori-Ryū Seiza Waza: Kaishaku

8I: KAISHAKU

Suicide Assistant

The seventh *Shoden Waza* is *Kaishaku*. This *waza* contains proper technique and etiquette for assisting a fellow *samurai* in committing suicide by *seppuku*. It is easiest to understand and practice if described and illustrated in its proper context.

Kaishaku begins facing straight ahead in *seiza* with the customary three cleansing breaths. You step forward with your right foot while beginning *nukitsuke*, drawing the blade slowly and quietly, so as not to disturb the concentration of the person committing *seppuku*. As you finish *nukitsuke*, you rise and step back with your right foot into a broad stance with both knees flexed (the same stance used for *Waki no Kamae*) and the sword held level overhead, then slowly lower the sword behind your head until the *kissaki* is at eye level. As shown in Figure 8I-5, the *kissaki* should be at the edge of your left eye's peripheral vision. This is the equivalent of *furikaburi*. Pause in this position. In actual use, you would wait until the *samurai* you are assisting has finished the horizontal cut across his abdomen. By twisting his dagger upward toward his sternum, the *samurai* would signal completion of his suicide efforts. At this point, you step forward with your right foot, swinging the sword one-handed in a diagonal arc angled 45 degrees to your lower-left, using your left hand to stop the *tsuka* and halt the travel of the blade precisely (Figure 8I-8). In actual practice, stopping the blade in this manner would prevent it from completely severing the *samurai*'s neck, so his head would not roll or bounce away disgracefully. *Chiburi* and *nōtō* are identical to those in *Ukenagashi*. While maintaining *zanshin*, you then rise to a standing position and step back to your starting point, standing fully erect with your hands at your sides.

8J: TSUKEKOMI

Seize Opportunity

The eighth *Shoden Waza* is *Tsukekomi*, which begins in *seiza* position facing straight ahead. At the inhalation of your third cleansing breath, begin

Figures 8J-1 through 8J-20 Ōmori-Ryū Seiza Waza: Tsukekomi

nukitsuke, stepping forward with your right foot and leaning slightly forward to deliberately expose your head to attack, as shown in Figure 8J-3, while drawing one-third to one-half of the blade. You rise quickly to full height (in *iaigoshi*), completing *nukitsuke* as an *Ukenagashi*-type block (Figure 8J-4). From this position, perform *furikaburi* as part of a continuous motion leading into a partial *kirioroshi* that stops with the blade angled upward at about 45 degrees. This *kirioroshi* is performed with a shuffle-step forward (right foot, then left foot) ending with the feet together as shown in Figure 8J-6 and with *iaigoshi* posture.

Raise the sword overhead in a second *furikaburi*, then shuffle-step forward again with a complete *kirioroshi* (Figure 8J-9), also with feet together in *iaigoshi* standing posture. Step back with the right foot into *shizentai*—natural upright stance—holding the sword in *Jōdan no Kamae* as shown in Figure 8J-10. After a brief pause, lower onto one knee, bringing the sword down in front of yourself, using the blade to protect your face and torso, as depicted in Figure 8J-11. Holding this posture, first invert your grip on the *tsuka* with your right hand, then cup your left hand beneath the *tsuba* as shown in Figure 8J-13.

Swiveling the sword on its *tsuba* in your left hand, use your right hand to turn it edge upward, pointing down and to your left at about a 45-degree angle, then draw the *tsuka* toward your right shoulder, letting the *mine* slide across the base of the fingers in your left hand as shown in Figure 8J-15. This motion, which mimics wiping the blade on a cloth or the hem of your *hakama*, substitutes for *chiburi*. Use your left hand to guide the *kissaki* to your left side and the mine into the crook of your arm, and complete *nōtō* in the same manner as following a "drip" *chiburi*. Rise and return to the starting position.

Here again is a *waza* with a subtle and somewhat complex *bunkai*. As with *Ukenagashi*, your opponent's sword is already drawn and ready to strike. Your apparent vulnerability as you begin *nukitsuke* (Figure 8J-3) lures the attacker into striking prematurely. Again, as you rise with an *Ukenagashi*-type block, his attack is thwarted, giving you the opportunity for counter-attack. In this case, either your first *kirioroshi* is not

Figures 8J-21 through 8J-22

fully effective, requiring a second, or—as in the case of *Yaegaki Ura*—a second attacker was lurking behind the first.

8K: TSUKIKAGE

Moon Shadow

Tsukikage, the ninth *waza* in the *Shoden* series, begins in *seiza* facing 45 degrees to the left. As you begin your third cleansing breath, look to your right as you grasp the *tsuka* in preparation for *nukitsuke*. Rise to a standing position (in *iaigoshi*) during *nukitsuke*, stopping with the blade angled upward at about a 45-degree angle as shown in Figure 8K-4.

Maintaining *iaigoshi* and holding the sword in this upward-angled position—with the feeling that you are keeping your head protected by the blade—step forward with your left foot. As you step forward next with your right foot, perform *furikaburi,* then *kirioroshi,* in a continuous motion so that the blade completes the downward cut as your right foot lands (Figure 8K-8). *Ōmori-Ryū chiburi* is performed from a standing position in *Tsukikage*.

Step back with your right foot and also do *Shoden nōtō* in a standing position. Do not lower onto one knee during *nōtō* in *Tsukikage*. Step back to your starting point after completing *nōtō*.

The *bunkai* for *Tsukikage* is another situation in which the attacker is already bearing down on you, sword drawn. As he strikes at your unguarded head, you use *nukitsuke* to slash his arms as they swing his sword down at you (Figure 8K-4). After driving forward to off-balance him, you finish the attacker with *kirioroshi*.

Figures 8K-1 through 8K-17 Ōmori-Ryū Seiza Waza: Tsukikage

Figure 8L-1 Ōmori-Ryū Seiza Waza: Oikaze

8L: OIKAZE

Chase the Wind

Oikaze, the tenth *Shoden Waza*, is the only one which begins from a standing position. As you inhale the third cleansing breath, rise onto your tip-toes as you grasp the *tsuka* in preparation for *nukitsuke*, then crouch slightly forward as you perform *koiguchi no kirikata*. Run forward in tiny, rapid steps as you begin *nukitsuke*, taking two or three normal size steps as you complete the level draw after covering a distance of about ten to fifteen feet (Figure 8L-1). Step forward with the left foot during *furikaburi*, then another step with the right foot during *kirioroshi*, as shown in Figure 8-10l. *Ōmori-Ryū chiburi* is again performed from a *standing* position in *Oikaze*, followed by a standing *Shoden nōtō* and a return to your starting point.

The *bunkai* for *Oikaze* may seem troubling at first, because it is obvious that you are chasing someone and cutting them down from behind. However, *Oikaze* involves a situation known as *jōiuchi* (orders from above), in which you have been instructed to either capture or execute an enemy who flees at the sight of you. You are carrying out your duty as an official of the sovereign government. You are acting lawfully, morally, and have no choice in the matter. In this situation, *nukitsuke* would either be used to hamstring the opponent as he runs, or blind him as he turns to fight. *Kirioroshi* of course follows to finish him with dignity.

Figures 8L-2 through 8L-21 Ōmori-Ryū Seiza Waza: Oikaze

Figures 8M-1 through 8M-14 Nukiuchi

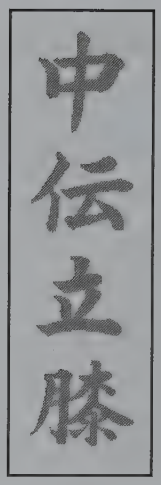
8M: NUKIUCHI

Sudden Attack

Last in the *Shoden* series, *Nukiuchi* begins facing straight ahead in *seiza* posture. On your third cleansing breath, grasp the *tsuka* and perform *koiguchi no kirikata*, then draw the sword straight up so that *nukitsuke* and *furikaburi* occur in a single motion as you rise up tall on your knees and get set on the balls of your feet (Figure 8M-4).

During *kirioroshi*, spread your knees wide for balance and stability while remaining on the balls of your feet. Do not allow your sword to strike the floor during *kirioroshi* (Figure 8M-7). As you perform an *Eishin-Ryū* ("flick") *chiburi* (Figure 8M-8), draw your knees back into the proper width for seiza, which will raise your hips and allow *Shoden nōtō* without your *kojiri* striking the floor. Remain on the balls of your feet during *nōtō* and gradually settle back onto your heels just as the *tsuba* meets your left hand. After you slide your right hand to the *tsuka-gashira*, flatten your feet against the floor, and lower yourself into *seiza* position.

The *bunkai* for *Nukiuchi* involves another instance of *jōiuchi*. In this *waza*, it is readily apparent that you are slaying someone who is bowing to you. In this situation, however, rather than fleeing—either being ignorant of or accepting his fate—the enemy bows, giving you the opportunity to end his life with merciful speed.



Chapter 9

Chūden Tatehiza Waza

Chūden Waza

The techniques that comprised *Hayashizaki-Ryū* during its formative years were predominantly those we now refer to as the *Okuden Waza*, including both the *Okuden Suwariwaza* performed from *tatehiza* (crouching) and most of the *Okuden Tachiwaza* (standing) techniques.

However, with the adaptation of *Hayashizaki-Ryū* techniques to the slightly shorter *katana* by the seventh generation grandmaster, *Hasegawa Eishin*, additional techniques were added to the style. The *Chūden Tatehiza Waza*—or at least most of them—were among those added by Hasegawa Eishin when the style took on his name. Unlike the *Shoden Waza*, the *Chūden Waza* were not renamed by the seventeenth grandmaster, Ōe Masamichi.

In Chapter 8, we explained the meaning of *den*, as in *Shoden* and *Chūden*. Just as we usually refer to *Shoden* as "initial level" or "beginning level" techniques, we describe *Chūden Waza* as "middle level" techniques.

One characteristic of *Chūden Waza* is that all but one (*Makkō*) begin in *tatehiza* posture. *Tatehiza* (standing knee) is a posture which most Westerners find particularly uncomfortable, but which the *samurai* of feudal Japan frequently used when relaxing while wearing *yoroi*, the wide-woven bamboo armor common to that age. Again, a *samurai* in *yoroi* could not comfortably sit in *seiza* or cross-legged in *agura*, which probably accounts for the use of *tatehiza* in nearly half the techniques of *Eishin-Ryū*.

To assume the *tatehiza* position, squat as though preparing to sit in *seiza* and use your right hand to swat your *hakama* free of your left leg as you lower onto your left knee. Tuck your left foot beneath you and sit on it with the ankle-bone centered between your buttocks. The right foot

remains flat on the floor, with the knee elevated. At the beginning of a *waza*, your hands should be resting in loosely clenched fists atop your knees while you perform your preparatory breathing.

Because *tatehiza* was a position used for resting, most of the techniques in the *Chūden* series are noticeably more defensive in nature than those found in *Shoden* or *Okuden Waza*, since they involve responses to a surprise attack. This is apparent in the fact that many of the techniques begin by moving away from the direction of attack, rather than toward the attacker, as is more common in the *Shoden Waza*.

Two other characteristics of this series of *waza* are that *Eishin-Ryū chiburi*—the "flicking" type—is used exclusively, and *Chūden nōtō* is also exclusively employed.

Remember from Chapter 7 that *Chūden nōtō* differs from *Shoden nōtō* in that when the *mine* is placed along the left forearm, only one-half to two-thirds of the blade is aligned on the arm, rather than the entire blade. From this point, the blade is drawn forward more quickly than in *Shoden nōtō*. Once the *kissaki* drops into the *koiguchi*, however, the blade is sheathed at about the same steady pace as in *Shoden nōtō*.

Although the *Chūden Waza* are now sometimes taught earlier in a student's training, traditionally they are taught about the time the student entered the *Ha* stage of *Shu • Ha • Ri* (see Chapter 5), while during the *Shu* phase the student trained predominantly in the *Shoden Waza* (Chapter 8) and *Tachi-uchi no Kurai* (Chapter 12).

9A: YOKOGUMO

Cloud Bank

The first *Chūden Waza*, *Yokogumo*, is essentially a *tatehiza* equivalent of *Seiza Mae*. *Yokogumo* begins facing straight ahead in *tatehiza* posture (Figure 9A-1) while taking the three preparatory breaths. As you inhale the third time, raise your hands to the *tsuka* and perform *koiguchi no kirikata*. As with the *Seiza Waza*, in *Chūden Waza* it is essential that you simultaneously set the ball of your left foot on the floor (Figure 9A-3) as you perform *nukitsuke*, so that you can push forward with your rear foot. Finish *nukitsuke* by stepping forward with your right foot as shown in Figure 9A-7.

(NOTE: As a variation of this *waza*, you may step backward with the left foot during nukitsuke. *Yokogumo* is usually practiced with the forward step described here, since it is easier to perform in this fashion, but the backward step is more consistent with the nature of a defense against a surprise attack.)

Perform *furikaburi* while moving your left knee forward for a better purchase (Figure 9A-8), then shuffle forward to increase the power of *kiri-oroshi*, while remaining in a kneeling position as shown in Figure 9A-9. Follow with *Eishin-Ryū* ("flick") *chiburi*. Note that in *Chūden Waza*, you remain in the kneeling posture during *chiburi*, rather than rising to your feet as in the *Shoden Waza*. *Nōtō* is also performed a bit differently in *tate-hiza* posture.

While the sword is being sheathed, the right foot is drawn backward at about the same speed that the sword is entering the *saya*. As your right heel comes into line with your left knee, the sword should be about 80 percent sheathed. Without changing the speed of the moving foot, slide

Figures 9A-1 through 9A-10 Chūden Tatehiza Waza: Yokogumo

Figures 9A-11 through 9A-19 Chūden Tatehiza Waza: Yokogumo

it in a small, clockwise circular motion—about one foot in diameter—so that the *tsuba* contacts your left hand at the same instant your right heel comes to rest beside your left heel in a squatting position (Figure 9A-16).

Notice from the illustration that your body will have turned slightly to the right as your right foot made this circular motion. Try to minimize this twisting action, so you remain facing as directly as possible to the front. You should now be squatting on your heels as your left thumb hooks over the *tsuba*, and your right hand slides to the *tsuka-gashira*.

Step forward with your right foot, reaching much the same position as at the end of *nukitsuke* (Figure 9A-18) and rise to a standing position (in *iaigoshi*), sliding your left foot forward to meet your right. Take two or three steps back to reach your original starting position. At this point, now standing fully erect, remove your right hand from the *tsuka-gashira* and return it to your right side while your left hand releases the *saya* and *tsuba* and returns to your left side to complete the *waza*.

The *bunkai* for *Yokogumo* is nearly identical to that of *Seiza Mae*, and it, too, is deceptively simple. You are being attacked by a single opponent directly in front of you. By sensing his intention to attack before he acts, you are able to draw more quickly, slashing his eyes to blind him, thus gaining the time to prepare for and execute *kirioroshi*.

9B: TORA NO ISSOKU

One Leg of a Tiger

The second *Chūden Waza, Tora no Issoku* begins facing straight ahead in *tatehiza* posture (see Figure 9B-1). As you take your third cleansing breath, begin *nukitsuke*, rising and drawing the *tsuka* at a downward angle, stepping back with your left foot and blocking in front of your right leg (with the blade edge forward) as shown in Figure 9B-5. During *furikaburi*, drop to one knee with your right foot leading, then shuffle forward while performing *kirioroshi*. *Tora no Issoku* ends identically to *Yokogumo*, with *Eishin-Ryū chiburi* and *Chūden tatehiza nōtō*, then rising and returning to your starting point.

Bunkai for *Tora no Issoku* is only slightly different than that for *Yokogumo*. Your attacker is directly in front of you. In this case, you have not beaten him to the draw, however. Instead, you must use *nukitsuke* to block his *nukitsuke* attack to your leading leg, then follow with *kirioroshi*.

Figures 9B-1 through 9B-17 Chūden Tatehiza Waza: Tora no Issoku

Figures 9C-1 through 9C-17 Chūden Tatehiza Waza: Inazuma

9C: INAZUMA

Lightning

The third *waza*, *Inazuma* begins facing straight ahead in *tatehiza* posture.

At the top of the third breath, begin *nukitsuke*. As you rise, use *nukitsuke* to cut straight upward in line with your right shoulder (Figure 9C-4). Drop to one knee, right foot leading, during *furikaburi*, then shuffle forward while performing *kirioroshi*. *Inazuma* also ends identically to *Yokogumo*, with *Eishin-Ryū chiburi*, and *Chūden tatehiza nōtō*. Rise to standing position and step back to your starting point.

In *Inazuma*, your opponent is again attacking from your front. This time, however, his sword was already drawn and he is attacking with *kirioroshi*. Your upward *nukitsuke* slashes his arms just as they reach full extension during *kirioroshi*, then you finish him with a *kirioroshi* of your own.

9D: UKIGUMO

Floating Clouds

Ukigumo is the fourth in this second series of *waza*, and begins in *tatehiza* posture facing 90 degrees to the left of your normal orientation. The photographs below, however, are shown at a 45 degree angle for the best perspective. On the third breath of *kokyū*, grasp the *tsuka* with your left hand and rise, stepping to your left as you twist the tsuka a half-circle counterclockwise, ending back at your left hip as shown in Figure 9D-2. Your right hand should still be resting at your right thigh. While stepping across with your left foot in front of your right, grasp the *tsuka* with your right hand and circle it clockwise, beginning *nukitsuke* as the *tsuka* rises past "six o'clock" the second time (Figures 9D-3 through 9D-5). As you complete *nukitsuke*, turn your body slightly to the left, aligning your shoulders with the blade and lowering your center of gravity by bending both knees slightly and twisting your left ankle so your weight rests on the outer edge of the foot (Figure 9D-6).

Figures 9D-1 through 9D-19 Chūden Tatehiza Waza: Ukigumo

Without allowing the blade to move, turn your body one quarter-turn to the right (see Figure 9D-7) and place the palm of your left hand against the *mine* as you step back with your right foot and drop to one knee. Turning your body another quarter-turn, push the blade downward to your right until it is pointing almost straight out from your right knee, as shown in Figure 9D-8. Use your left hand to gently "flip" the blade upward during *furikaburi* (Figure 9D-9), then perform *kirioroshi* at a 45-degree angle down and to the left, ending at the position shown in Figure 9D-10. With your left foot still forward, perform *Eishin-Ryū chiburi*, and *Chūden tatehiza nōtō*. Rise to standing position and step back to your starting point, then place your hands at your side.

Ukigumo anticipates that you are seated in the midst of a group of people, when one or more attack you. The circular movements that give *Ukigumo* its name (Floating Clouds) are used to avoid striking other people seated around you as you avoid an opponent's attempt to grab your *tsuka* to prevent you from drawing. Without these movements, it is likely that your sword would bump against or entangle with the bystanders, hindering your ability to draw and defend yourself.

9E: YAMAOROSHI

Mountain Wind

The fifth *Chūden Waza*, *Yamaoroshi*, begins facing 90 degrees to the left in *tatehiza*. As you inhale the third cleansing breath, look to your right (at about a 45-degree angle) as you grasp the *tsuka* with both hands, then step at a 45-degree angle to your right as you rise to one knee, twisting the *tsuka* in a clockwise circle and striking with the *tsukagashira*. This action avoids an opponent's attempt to grab your *tsuka* and strikes the opponent in the face. *Nukitsuke* is performed by drawing all but the last few inches of the blade, then using a powerful snap of your right wrist with a simultaneous leftward twist of your hips as your left foot slides forward almost to your right foot, finishing with the blade angled upward at about 45 degrees as depicted in Figure 9E-8.

Figures 9E-1 through 9E-20 Chūden Tatehiza Waza: Yamaoroshi

Without allowing the sword to move from the finish of *nukitsuke*, place the palm of your hand on the *mine* at about midway along the blade, turn your body 90 degrees to the right, extend your right leg, then push the blade horizontally to the right while shifting your body weight onto your right leg, as depicted in Figures 9E-9 through 9E-11. Use your left hand to gently "flip" the blade upward during *furikaburi,* while sliding your body and left foot to the right so that you shift beneath the overhead blade, then perform *kirioroshi* straight downward with a small step forward with your right foot (Figure 9E-14). From this position, perform *Eishin-Ryū chiburi* and *Chūden tatehiza nōtō*, then rise to standing position and step back to your starting point.

The *bunkai* for *Yamaoroshi* is another defense against an attempt to grab your *tsuka*. This time, rather than being seated to your right, as in *Ukigumo*, your opponent is seated diagonally in front and to the right of you. As he reaches for your *tsuka*, you twist the *tsuka* away from—or out of—his grasp, then strike his face with the *tsuka-gashira* (Figure 9E-5), stunning him just long enough for you to counterattack with *nukitsuke* (Figure 9E-8), slash the blade free (Figure 9E-11), and finish him with *kirioroshi* (Figure 9E-14). This swirling, slashing counterattack brings to mind the harsh, icy winds that blow down the slope of a mountain, hence the name *Yamaoroshi*.

Figures 9E-21 through 9E-23 Chūden Tatehiza Waza: Yamaoroshi

Figures 9F-1 through 9F-20 Iwanami

9F: IWANAMI

Waves Breaking Against the Rocks

Iwanami is the sixth *waza* of the *Chūden* series. It begins in *tatehiza*, facing 90 degrees to the right (Figure 9F-1). As you inhale the final cleansing breath, look 90 degrees to your left and begin to rise, stepping back with your left foot as you draw about three-fourths of the sword (Figure 9F-3). Place the fingertips of your left hand against the *mine* to guide the last few inches of the blade from the *saya*, then pivot 90 degrees to your left while using both hands to turn the blade over as you rise to a standing position (with *iaigoshi*), as shown in Figure 9F-5. Stutter-step with your right foot to confuse your opponent's timing, then step forward with your right foot while dropping to one knee and thrusting the blade forward with an upward rolling motion, using your left hand to steady and guide the blade, as depicted in Figure 9F-7. Leaving your left hand in position against the *mine*, twist the blade 90 degrees to your right, step sideways with your right foot and shuffle to your right while pushing the blade horizontally to tear it free of your opponent (Figures 9F-8 and 9F-9). As in *Ukigumo* and *Yamaoroshi*, use the fingers of your left hand to "flip"the blade overhead during *furikaburi*, while simultaneously sliding your body beneath the upraised sword. Then, with a slight forward step of the right foot, perform *kirioroshi* straight down to finish your attacker before performing *Eishin-Ryū chiburi* and *Chūden tatehiza nōtō*. Rise to standing position and step back to your starting point.

Bunkai for *Iwanami* involves an attack initiated from your left side. You draw and prepare to thrust (Figure 9F-5), then use the stutter-step to throw the opponent's timing off as you perform a reinforced thrust. This thrust has an upward curling motion that is reminiscent of a wave crashing against a rocky shoreline, giving the *waza* its name.

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Figures 9F-21 through 9F-22 Iwanami

9G: UROKOGAESHI

Sudden Turn

The seventh *Chūden Waza* is *Urokogaeshi*. This *waza* is the *Chūden* equivalent of *Seiza Migi*, so it begins facing 90 degrees to the right in *tatehiza* posture.

As you take your third cleansing breath, look 90 degrees to your left, then perform a level *nukitsuke* with a sharp left turn (Figure 9G-2 through 9G-6). Drop to one knee, with your right foot forward during *furikaburi*, followed by *kirioroshi*, *Eishin-Ryū chiburi*, and *Chūden tatehiza nōtō*. Rise to standing position and step back to your starting point.

The attack in *Urokogaeshi* is coming from your left side and the *bunkai* is essentially the same as in *Seiza Migi*: sensing an adversary's intention to attack, you turn suddenly and slash across the opponent's eyes with *nukitsuke*, then finish with *kirioroshi*. Our translation of the name *Urokogaeshi* as "Sudden Turn," while descriptive of its technique, fails to capture the full imagery of the original Japanese. *Uroko* means "fish scales," and *Urokogaeshi* refers to the way a fish twists itself nearly in half, its scales flashing in the water, as it turns from peril. This is the character you should seek in *Urokogaeshi*: a quick, twisting turn and the bright flash of *nukitsuke* at the onslaught of danger.

Figures 9G-1 through 9G-19 Chūden Tatehiza Waza: Urokogaeshi

9H: NAMIGAESHI

Returning Wave

The eighth *Chūden Waza* is *Namigaeshi*, the *tatehiza* equivalent of the *Shoden Waza*, *Seiza Ushiro*. Thus, *Namigaeshi* begins facing to the rear. At the inhalation of your third cleansing breath, perform *nukitsuke*, pivoting 180 degrees to your left rise with a level, standing draw (Figures 9H-2 through 9H-7). Drop to one knee, right foot forward, during *furikaburi*, then perform *kirioroshi*, *Eishin-Ryū chiburi*, and *Chūden tatehiza nōtō*. Rise to standing position and step back to your starting point.

Namigaeshi is basically the *Chūden* equivalent of *Seiza Ushiro*, so its *bunkai* is essentially the same. As you sense an attack from the rear, you peek over your shoulder, turn during *nukitsuke*, slash your opponent's eyes, and finish him with *kirioroshi*.

Figures 9H-1 through 9H-20 Chūden Tatehiza Waza: Namigaeshi

Figures 9I-1 through 9I-20 Chūden Tatehiza Waza: Takiotoshi

9I: TAKIOTOSHI

Cascading Waterfall

Takiotoshi, the ninth *waza* in the *Chūden* series, begins in *tatehiza* facing to the rear. This *waza* is a defense against an attacker who grabs the end of your *saya* (the *kojiri*) and raises it so you will be unable to draw in defense against another attacker in front of you.

As you take your final cleansing breath, glance over your left shoulder as you grasp the *tsuka* while stepping back with your left foot (Figure 9I-2) and performing *koiguchi no kirikata*. Rise to a standing position (in *iaigoshi*) with a shuffle to the rear while thrusting sharply downward on the *tsuka* to break the opponent's grip, as shown in Figure 9I-3.

Still looking over your shoulder at your opponent, draw your left foot slightly ahead of your right foot, while twisting the *tsuka* in a clockwise direction to wrench the *kojiri* completely free of the attacker's grasp and take a step forward with your right foot while performing *nukitsuke*. As the sword is nearly drawn, pivot 180 degrees left on the balls of both feet, so that the twist of your hips pulls the last couple of inches of blade from the *saya*. Keep the blade close by your right hip, held flat with the edge turned away from your body, as depicted in Figure 9I-6. With a left-right shuffle-step forward, execute a one-handed thrust to the opponent's solar plexus, as shown in Figure 9I-7. Withdraw the *kissaki* from the opponent by pulling your right hand slightly back while twisting the blade a quarter-turn counterclockwise, so the *mine* is upward, and perform *furikaburi* while beginning to step forward with the right foot so that the sword is directly overhead, poised for *kirioroshi* just as the right foot passes the left foot.

Complete the step forward by dropping to one knee during *kirioroshi* as depicted in Figure 9I-11. Complete the *waza* with *Eishin-Ryū chiburi* and *Chūden nō tō*. Rise to standing position and step back to your starting point.

Figure 9I-21

9J: TAKIOTOSHI

Side View

Presented below in side view is the sequence from Figure 9I-3 through 9I-11 above. This affords a clearer view of the movement of the sword to escape the attacker's grasp.

The name *Takiotoshi* comes from the swirling, dancing movements of the sword as you evade the grasp of your attackers, turn, thrust, and slash downward, motions reminiscent of the weaving path of a small waterfall cascading down a rocky mountainside.

Figures 9J-1 through 9J-10 Chūden Tatehiza Waza: Takiotoshi (Side View)

9K: MAKKŌ

Face to Face

Last in the *Chūden* series, *Makkō* is nearly identical to the *Shoden Waza*, *Nukiuchi*. Like *Nukiuchi*, *Makkō* begins facing straight ahead in *seiza* posture (Figure 9K-1). On your third cleansing breath, draw the sword straight up so that *nukitsuke* and *furikaburi* occur in a single motion as you rise up tall on your knees and get set on the balls of your feet (see Figure 9K-5)

Figures 9K-1 through 9K-14 Chūden Tatehiza Waza: Makkō

for *kirioroshi*. Conclude with *Eishin-Ryū chiburi* (drawing your knees back to the proper separation for *seiza*) and *Chūden tatehiza nōtō*, remaining on the balls of your feet during *nōtō* while you gradually settle back onto your heels as the *tsuba* meets your left hand. After you slide your right hand to the *tsuka-gashira*, rise up slightly, flatten your feet against the floor, and lower yourself into *seiza* position.

The key distinctions between *Makkō* and *Nukiuchi* are: (1) *nukitsuke*, *furi-kaburi*, and *kirioroshi* are performed almost as a single action in *Makkō*, more quickly than in *Nukiuchi*, and (2) *Chūden nōtō* is employed in *Makkō*. *Bunkai* for *Makkō* is identical to that of *Nukiuchi*: a case of *jōiuchi* to execute the enemy facing you. As the opponent bows, you swiftly draw and strike in a sudden and continuous motion.

奥伝立業

Chapter 10

Okuden Tachiwaza

Tachiwaza

The *Okuden* (deep level) *Tachiwaza* (standing techniques)—or at least most of them)—were part of *Hayashizaki-Ryū* during its formative years. With the adaptation of *Hayashizaki-Ryū* techniques to the slightly shorter *katana* by the seventh generation grandmaster, Hasegawa Eishin, most or all of the *tachiwaza* had to be modified in some respect to accommodate the newer sword design.

Following the progression from *Shoden* (initial level) to *Chūden* (middle level), we have reached *Okuden*, or "deep level" techniques. It was once customary to begin training in the *Okuden Waza* late in the *Ha* period of *Shu • Ha • Ri*, so that mastery of the *Okuden* techniques occurred during *Ri*, when the student was already considered a master of swordsmanship. In more recent times, it is not unusual for students to begin learning *Okuden Waza* shortly after becoming *yudansha*, the equivalent of a black belt.

As we find in translating many Japanese words, *Oku* holds some interesting nuances, and "deep" really does not convey its full flavor. *Oku* actually describes the "innermost," that which lies at the very core or heart of a matter. So, in a real as well as literal sense, the *Okuden Waza* are truly the *core* curriculum of *Musō Jikiden Eishin-Ryū Iaijutsu*.

One characteristic of the *Okuden Tachiwaza* is that all except the three *Itomagoi Waza* are performed from a standing or walking posture. *Tachiwaza* begin from a standing position and most of the responses to attack are bolder, since you have greater mobility and power while standing. A standing *samurai* is also less suseptible to a surprise attack than when sitting in *seiza* or relaxing in *tatehiza*.

Most *Tachiwaza* employ a standardpattern of footwork that begins

Figure 10A-1 Okuden Tachiwaza "Power Stance"

standing erect, with your feet together as if at "Attention" while taking your three cleansing breaths. As you finish inhaling the third breath, hold that breath and step forward with your *right* foot. As you step with your left foot, both hands rise simultaneously to grasp the *tsuka* and perform *koiguchi no kirikata*. Then, as you take your third step (right foot again), you perform *nukitsuke*.

The stance used during *Okuden kirioroshi* is also different from that used in the *Shoden* and *Chūden Waza*. Rather than finishing with your hips squarely forward in a stance similar to the *zenkutsu dachi* (front stance) used in *karate*, with the back leg straight and heel slightly off the ground, *Okuden Tachiwaza* use what we will call a "power stance." Unique to the *Tachiwaza*, this power stance is a modified version of the "front stance" used in the *Shoden* and *Chūden Waza*. The front leg is bent and bears most of your weight, but your hips and shoulders are turned about 30 degrees from directly forward. Your rear leg is bent slightly, with the foot pointing directly sideways and flat on the floor. This stance, illustrated in Figure 10A-1 at left, generates greater cutting power than that used in *Shoden* and *Chūden Waza*.

Two other characteristics of this series of *waza* are that the "flicking" type *Eishin-Ryū chiburi* is used almost exclusively, as well as *Okuden nōtō*, which was described in detail in Chapter 7.

10B: YUKIZURE

Escorted

The first *Okuden Waza*, *Yukizure*, is a defensive technique used when walking in the custody of two opponents, one at either shoulder. In such a situation, you are likely being taken to be executed or interrogated, so you are under obligation to your lord to escape if at all possible. As you finish inhaling the third *kokyū* cleansing breath, you take your first step forward with your right foot. Your second step (left foot) is made with a distinct movement toward your left side that knocks one opponent off balance as you raise your hands to the *tsuka*. With the left hand gripping the *saya* at the same moment your right hand grasps the *tsuka*, perform *koiguchi no kirikata*.

Figures 10B-1 through 10B-17 Okuden Tachiwaza: Yukizure

As you take your third step, turn 45 degrees to your right as you perform *nukitsuke*, drawing the sword in a downward-slashing arc with the "power stance" described previously, ending with the *kissaki* pointing upward at about a 45-degree angle, as shown in Figure 10B-9. Perform *furikaburi* while turning 90 degrees to your left as you step forward with your right foot, and perform *kirioroshi*, also in the "power stance" (Figure 10B-12). Follow this with *Eishin-Ryū chiburi* and *Okuden nōtō* while remaining in the "power stance," maintaining *zanshin*. After your right hand slides to the *tsuka-gashira*, maintain *iaigoshi* while sliding your left foot up to meet your right foot, then pivot 45 degrees to your right and step back to your original starting position. At this point, now standing fully erect, remove your right hand from the *tsuka-gashira* and return it to your right side while your left hand releases the *saya* and *tsuba* and returns to your left side.

The *bunkai* and techniques of *Yukizure* are more abrupt and bold than those of the *Shoden* and *Chūden Waza*. In *Yukizure*, you are being escorted by two *samurai*, possibly because you previously had no opportunity to escape or were invited to accompany them under false pretenses. When you realize their treachery or sense their intention to kill or capture you, you seize the opportunity to counterattack by lurching against the one on your left. While he is off-balance, you draw and kill the foe on your right before he can react, then finish the first adversary before he can recover his balance. It is typical of *Okuden Waza* that they present both technique and strategy and are thus *oku* (deeper) than *Shoden* or *Chūden Waza*.

10C: TSUREDACHI

Companions

The second *Okuden Waza*, *Tsuredachi*, involves a situation similar to that in *Yukizure*. In this case, however, your opponents are escorting you at an angle; the one to your left is a half-step behind you, and the one to your right is a half-step ahead. As you take your second step (left foot) of the *waza*, raise your hands to the *tsuka*, with the left hand gripping the *saya* at the same moment your right hand grasps the *tsuka*. Then, as you take

Figures 10C-1 through 10C-15 Okuden Tachiwaza: Tsuredachi

your third step, perform *koiguchi no kirikata* while turning 45 degrees to your right and thrusting forward with both hands, as if performing *tsuka-ate* (a strike with the *tsuka-gashira*). Next pull the *saya* back, performing *nukitsuke*, and take a half step to your rear while turning your left shoulder aside and making a one-hand chest-level thrust to the rear.

As illustrated in Figure 10C-9, this thrust should be horizontal, with the blade turned sideways—edge away from you—and with the underside of your right forearm reinforcing the *tsuka*.

Raise the sword in *furikaburi* and take a shuffle-step forward as you execute *kirioroshi* at a 45-degree angle to your right-front, as depicted in Figure 10C-11, following with *Eishin-Ryū chiburi* and *Okuden nōtō*. After your right hand slides to the *tsuka-gashira*, maintain *iaigoshi* while sliding your left foot up to meet your right foot, then pivot 45 degrees to your left and, maintaining *zanshin*, step back to your original starting position.

Bunkai for *Tsuredachi* is only slightly different than that for *Yukizure*. You are again dealing with two opponents, only they are escorting you at an angle, rather than at your sides. This time, your action begins as you take your third step of the *waza* (with your right foot). You lunge toward the opponent to your right-front, knocking him temporarily off balance. Then, by merely pulling back the *saya*, you perform *nukitsuke*. The shuffle-step toward your left-rear not only ensures that you are within striking distance for the thrust which dispatches the opponent behind you, but also blocks him from making a normal *nukitsuke* and distances you from the enemy to your front. Before the opponent at your front can recover, you lunge ahead and finish him with *kirioroshi*.

10D: SŌMAKURI

All Around

The third *waza, Sōmakuri*, is the most complex of the *Tachiwaza*, earning its name with a total of five cutting strokes which attack nearly every major target on the body. As you take your second step (left foot), position your hands for *koiguchi no kirikata*. On your third step, perform *koiguchi no kirikata* and draw about half the blade, then step abruptly back with

Figures 10D-1 through 10D-18 Okuden Tachiwaza: Sōmakuri

the right foot, completing *nukitsuke* overhead as an *Ukenagashi*-type block (Figure 10D-4). Next, take a shuffle-step forward—right foot, then left foot—while performing *furikaburi* and an angular *kirioroshi* aimed at your opponent's temple (see Figure 10D-5). With another shuffle-step forward, *kirioroshi* at neck level on the opposite side of the opponent, as shown in Figure 10D-6. Your next step forward lands in the "power stance" with an angular cut—slanting about 45 degrees down to your left—at rib level on your opponent's left side (Figure 10D-7). Without moving your feet, and chiefly using a twist of your wrists, flip the sword back next to your left side at waist level, then take another shuffle-step forward—lunging with the right foot, then letting your left foot "drag" forward—as your perform a *yoko ichimon-ji* (level horizontal) cut from left to right. Allow your follow-through from *yoko ichimon-ji* to carry the blade around and up into *furikaburi* in a single, fluid motion, drawing your left foot forward to meet your right foot, then take another step forward with your right foot as you finish with *kirioroshi*. Complete the *waza* with *Eishin-Ryū chiburi* and *Okuden nōtō*, draw your left foot up to meet your right foot, and step back to your original starting position.

10E: SŌMAKURI

Side View

The sequence of cuts (Figures 10E-1 through 10E-14 above) are shown at right (page 183) in side view to provide further detail of the footwork and angles of attack.

Bunkai for *Sōmakuri* includes several possible interpretations. The most basic application is against a single attacker who is back-pedaling to escape your counterattacks after his first unsuccessful attack. Because of his deft evasive movements, your first four counterattacks do not finish him. At the other extreme, you are defending against up to five opponents who rush at you single-file. This is not as unlikely as it may at first seem, since a single-file onslaught has the strategic advantage of making it difficult for you to determine the number of your attackers, and the timing and nature of their attacks.

Figures 10E-1 through 10E-14 Okuden Tachiwaza: Sōmakuri (Side View)

10F: SŌDOME

Stop Everything

Sōdome is the fourth in the *Okuden* series of *waza*, and contains techniques which are extremely awkward and difficult to master.

As you finish your third cleansing breath, take your first step forward with your right foot. Raise your hands to the *tsuka* as you take your second step (left foot), gripping the *saya* with your left hand at the same moment your right hand grasps the *tsuka*. Then, as you take your third step, perform *koiguchi no kirikata* followed by *nukitsuke*, landing in the "power stance" as shown in Figure 10F-6.

Note that the blade is angled upward at about a 45-degree angle. The power for this strike is derived from the reverse rotation of your hips, snapping them to your left, opposite from the direction of the travel of the sword.

After a slight pause, step forward with your left foot—just slightly ahead of your right foot—as you perform *nōtō*, twisting your hips forward once again, as depicted in Figure 10F-10. When you have nearly completed *nōtō*, with only a couple of inches of blade unsheathed, step forward with your right foot again and perform *nukitsuke* exactly as before. Again step forward with your left foot as you perform *nōtō*, then perform a third *nukitsuke*, exactly as before (Figure 10F-16). Now shift to a "front stance" as you do *Eishin-Ryū chiburi*, followed by *Okuden nōtō*. Once your right hand has reached the *tsuka-gashira*, maintain *iaigoshi* while sliding your left foot up to meet your right foot, then step back to your original starting position.

Figures 10F-1 through 10F-19 Okuden Tachiwaza: Sōdome

10G: SŌDOME

Side View

To present the footwork and timing of the multiple *nukitsuke* and *nōtō* combinations in *Sōdome* more clearly, the sequence of movements shown in Figures 10F-3 through 10F-16 above are depicted in the side view at right (page 187).

Sōdome is another *waza* with several possible variations of its *bunkai*. It is most commonly interpreted as a defense against an ambush while walking along an *azemichi*, the narrow path which separates one rice paddy from another and is often bordered by a low hedge in which enemies could conceal themselves. As each opponent springs from concealment, you use the downward-slicing *nukitsuke* before he has a chance to complete his attack.

An equally appropriate use of *Sōdome* is against a series of opponents rushing up at you as you descend a flight of temple, castle, or garden steps—or down a narrow mountainside path with dense undergrowth from which enemies could emerge. In such cases, you would use the advantage of being uphill to cut your opponents down before they could achieve proper purchase for their feet as they rush upward to attack.

Figures 10G-1 through 10G-18 Okuden Tachiwaza: Sōdome (Side View)

10H: SHINOBU

Stealthy

The fifth *Okuden Waza*, *Shinobu*, is quite unique in nature, and its apparent simplicity is deceptive. In this *waza*, you sense the approach of an attacker stalking you on a dark, moonless, or overcast night in which neither of you can see the other.

As you finish inhaling your third cleansing breath, take your first step forward with your right foot and perform *koiguchi no kirikata*. Begin *nukitsuke* as you take your second step (left foot) at about a 45-degree angle to your left (Figure 10H-4). *Nukitsuke* should be slow and very quiet. Complete *nukitsuke* while taking your third step, crossing your right foot in front of your left. Bend both knees, lowering your body while maintaining erect posture as you turn 90 degrees to your right. Extending your arm almost fully, lightly tap the floor twice with the *kissaki*, as depicted in Figure 10H-9. Still facing 45 degrees to your right, step forward with your right foot into *kirioroshi* (Figure 10H-11). Finish with *Eishin-Ryū chiburi* and *Okuden nōtō*, and step back to your original starting position.

Bunkai for *Shinobu* reflects the uniqueness of this *waza*. Knowing that both you and your opponent are stalking each other by sound, you step silently to your left as you draw your sword, then reach far to your right—where your opponent expects to find you—and make a slight noise by tapping the *kissaki* on the ground. Thinking it to be a misstep, your enemy will attack in the direction of the sound, and—guided by the whoosh of his sword—you defeat him with *kirioroshi*.

Figures 10H-1 through 10H-13 Okuden Tachiwaza: Shinobu

Figure 10I-1

10I: YUKICHIGAI

Passing By

Yukichigai is the sixth *waza* of the *Okuden* series and deals with another common type of ambush. In this instance, your attackers are walking toward you, passing on both sides of you, with the one on your left in the lead. Just as the first opponent passes, he turns to attack from your rear quarter, while his accomplice simultaneously attacks from your front-right.

As you finish inhaling the third time, take your first step forward with your right foot. As you take your second step (left foot) raise your hands to the *tsuka*, with the left hand gripping the *saya* at the same moment your right hand grasps the *tsuka*. Then, as you take your third step, perform *koiguchi no kirikata* while turning 45 degrees to your right and thrusting forward with both hands, performing *tsuka-ate* (striking with the butt of the handle) at face height (Figure 10I-4).

Next, pull the *saya* back, performing *nukitsuke* as you pivot—without changing the position of your feet—180 degrees to your left, completing *nukitsuke* as an *ukenagashi*-type overhead block, as depicted in Figure 10I-6.

In a continuous motion—still without moving your feet—raise your left hand to the *tsuka* during *furikaburi*, then strike downward with *kirioroshi*, as shown in Figure 10I-8.

Raise the sword into *furikaburi* as you pivot—still without moving your feet—180 degrees to your right and finish with another *kirioroshi* (Figure 10I-10).

Complete the *waza* with *Eishin-Ryū* ("flick") *chiburi*, followed by *Okuden nōtō*. After moving your right hand to the *tsuka-gashira*, maintain *iaigoshi* while sliding your left foot up to meet your right foot, then step back to your original starting position. At this point, now standing fully erect, remove your right hand from the *tsuka-gashira* and return it to your right side while your left hand releases the *saya* and *tsuba* and returns to your left side.

Figures 101-2 through 101-11 Okuden Tachiwaza: Yukichigai

The *bunkai* for *Yukichigai* involves elements of timing and speed, as well as economy of motion. With two enemies attacking simultaneously, there is no time to lose and no room for error. In the fraction of a second it takes for the attacker to your rear to turn in preparation for his strike, you must drive your *tsuka-gashira* into the face of the assailant to your front. By pivoting as you draw, your sword is protecting your body from the attacker behind you even before your draw is complete. Your *Ukenagashi* and *kiri-oroshi* must follow only a split-second apart, so you will be able to pivot and finish the attacker to your front before he can recover from the blow to his face and resume his assault.

10J: SODE SURIGAESHI

Brushing Sleeves

The seventh in this series is *Sode Surigaeshi* which, like many of the *Okuden Waza*, has quite a unique character. You are faced by a single attacker who is lurking amid a crowd of innocent bystanders, using them as human shields as he prepares to attack you. You must avoid injuring these bystanders while pushing through the crowd to confront and defeat this attacker.

As you finish inhaling your third cleansing breath, take your first step forward with your right foot. As you take your second step (left foot), raise your hands to the *tsuka* in preparation for *nukitsuke*. Then, as you take your third step, perform *koiguchi no kirikata* and draw most of the sword (Figure 10J-5). As you complete *nukitsuke*, step back with your right foot, rising on tip-toe and crossing your arms in front of you, so that the sword is pointing straight back behind you, as illustrated in Figure 10J-6. Lower your hips and take a long step forward with your right foot, spreading your arms to the sides, as shown in Figures 10J-7 through 10J-9. Slide your left foot up to meet your right foot as you raise the sword to *furikaburi*, then step forward with your right foot to perform *kirioroshi*. Without changing your stance, perform *Eishin-Ryū chiburi* and *Okuden nōtō*, then step back to your original starting position.

10K: SODE SURIGAESHI

Side View

Further detail of the relationship between the footwork and movement of the sword can be seen in the side view on page 194.

The situation in *Sode Surigaeshi* is as interesting as the technique used to overcome it. To avoid cutting the bystanders, you draw your sword and fold your arms across your chest, so your sword is pointed away from them. You must lower your hips as you lunge forward through the crowd in order to gain the leverage needed to push them aside. By keeping your sword edge-up as you swing your arms to the sides, you avoid accidentally slashing any of the bystanders as you push your way clear of them.

Figures 10J-1 through 10J-13 Okuden Tachiwaza: Sode Surigaeshi

Then, once free of the crowd, you can continue the motion into *furikaburi* and dispose of your attacker with *kirioroshi*. By not waiting for your opponent to burst through the crowd at you, you have seized the initiative and are able to catch him unprepared. Obviously, this *waza* takes its name from the act of pushing aside the innocent bystanders—with your sleeves brushing theirs as you clear a path to your opponent.

Figures 10K-1 through 10K-9 Okuden Tachiwaza: Sode Surigaeshi (Side View)

10L: MONIRI

Gate Entry

The eighth *Okuden Waza* is *Moniri*, which portrays an effective defense against another ambush attempt. In *Moniri*, your enemies are lying in wait at a narrow entry gate—the kind that are very common in Japan. Passing through such a gate is a vulnerable moment for a *samurai*, since its sides hamper a normal drawing motion and its low top beam prevents *kirioroshi*. Two ambushers are waiting on the far side of the gate while a third stalks you from behind. This presents a challenging situation, because if you turn to deal with the attacker to your rear, the two in front will rush through the gate behind you. But, if you attempt to pass through the gate, all three will converge on you while you are confined within its framework.

At the completion of your three cleansing breaths, take your first step forward with your right foot. As you take your second step (left foot) raise your hands to the tsuka and perform *koiguchi no kirikata*. On your third step, draw most of the sword and complete *nukitsuke* on your fourth step (left foot) by pulling the sword back to your right side, parallel to the floor and with the edge away from you next to your hip (Figure 10L-6). Step forward with your right foot and perform a one-handed thrust (Figure 10L-7), supporting the *tsuka* against the underside of your forearm and the blade horizontal. Pivot 180 degrees to your left as you grasp the *tsuka* with both hands and perform *furikaburi*, then step forward with your right foot. Normally, you would use the momentum of your stride to add power to *kirioroshi*. In this case, however, make sure you have taken a complete step while still in *furikaburi, then* perform *kirioroshi*. This delay ensures that your swing will not be blocked by the top beam of the gate. Again pivot 180 degrees to your left during the second *furikaburi*, and step forward—once more delaying *kirioroshi* until your have completed the step forward with your right foot, and cleared the gate. Now perform *Eishin-Ryū chiburi* and *Okuden nōtō*, and step back to your original starting position.

It may be easier to visualize the essential timing of the footwork with *kirioroshi* in the side view presentation on page 197.

Figures 10L-1 through 10L-12 Okuden Tachiwaza: Moniri

10M: MONIRI

Side View

There are many subtle aspects of the *bunkai* for *Moniri* which warrant explanation. The unusual *nukitsuke*, for instance, is used to prepare for a straight thrust. The sword must be fully drawn and ready on the fourth step (left foot in front). When you step forward with the right foot and thrust, you are stepping through the gate, thus using it for your protection as you thrust your sword into one of the two ambushers on the far side of the gate. Then you turn while still protected by the gate as you perform *furikaburi*, but you must step completely clear of the gate before using *kirioroshi* on the attacker who was behind you. If you try to use your body's momentum for a more powerful cut, you risk striking the top of the gate on the upswing. With your blade wedged deep in the wood and your hands overhead exposing your entire torso, you will almost certainly lose the battle. Similarly, as you pivot and step back through the gate to

Figures 10M-1 through 10M-9 Okuden Tachiwaza: Moniri (Side View)

perform *kirioroshi* on the last assailant, you must complete your step first, then swing the sword. When done at full speed, this subtle difference in timing is difficult to see. Yet correctly performing this *Moniri* makes all the difference in the world—a life-or-death difference in application—so it must be given close attention in your practice.

10N: KABEZOE

Against the Wall

Kabezoe, the ninth *waza* in the *Okuden* group, contains an unusual-looking defense designed for a situation which was quite common in major cities in feudal Japan. By Western standards, Japanese streets and alleys seem narrow, even today. Four centuries ago, before automobiles or even bicycles, this was even more the case. It was not unusual for a *samurai* to find himself walking down a narrow alley that was little more than the width of his own shoulders. *Kabezoe* provides a defense if attacked in this situation.

At the completion of your cleansing breaths, step forward with your right foot, then as you take your second step (left foot), perform *koiguchi no kirikata*. On your third step, draw your right foot even with your left foot and rise onto tiptoe as you draw almost straight upward, as shown in Figure 10N-3. Allow the *kissaki* to swing around just past your shoulder and behind you as you raise your left hand to the *tsuka* for *furikaburi*, as illustrated in Figure 10N-4. While still on tiptoe, perform *kirioroshi*, allowing the *kissaki* to swing down to about knee level, rather than stopping its travel level with your navel as you normally would (Figure 10N-7). Remaining on tiptoes, perform an abbreviated *chiburi* with a snap and twist of your right wrist (Figure 10N-8).

Then you move into a modified *Okuden nōtō*, keeping your left elbow snug against your side and raising the *tsuka* to face level during the rapid portion of *nōtō*, as depicted in Figure 10N-12.

While completing the slow portion of *nōtō*, lower yourself to a flat-footed stance (in *iaigoshi*) as you drop both hands to a normal finishing position. After moving your right hand to the *tsuka-gashira*, step back to your original starting position. Once you are standing fully erect, remove

Figures 10N-1 through 10N-14 Okuden Tachiwaza: Kabezoe

your right hand from the *tsuka-gashira* and return it to your right side while your left hand releases the *saya* and *tsuba* and returns to your left side.

In the side view below, some aspects of the movement of the sword within narrow confines during *nukitsuke*, *furikaburi*, and *kirioroshi* can be better seen.

100: KABEZOE

Side View

The narrow alleyways that *Kabezoe* anticipates were another favorite trap, since the cramped space prevents a normal *nukitsuke*. The unusual, compressed *nukitsuke* and *kirioroshi* of *Kabezoe* allow you to draw and defeat your opponent in these narrow confines. Likewise, the *chiburi* and *nōtō* peculiar to this *waza* permitted resheathing of the sword in such limited space.

Figures 100-1 through 100-10 Okuden Tachiwaza: Kabezoe (Side View)

10P: UKENAGASHI

Flowing Block

Last of the *Okuden Tachiwaza*, *Ukenagashi* follows the basic principle of its *Shoden* namesake—the continuous-motion draw, block, and counter-attack—but performed while standing or walking, rather than seated.

As you finish inhaling your third cleansing breath, take your first step forward with your right foot. On your second step, your left foot crosses in front of your right, so you are turned about 45 degrees to the right as you perform *koiguchi no kirikata* and draw about one-third to one-half of the sword (Figure 10P-3).

Your right foot now steps a little farther to the right and to the rear of your left—in a triangular pattern much like that used in the *Shoden* version of *Ukenagashi*—as you twist your upper body 45 degrees to your left and complete *nukitsuke* as a rising *Ukenagashi* (see Figure 10P-6). Twist your upper body another 45 degrees to your left as the sword swivels into *furikaburi*, grasp the *tsuka* with your left hand, and shuffle-step (left foot, then right foot) forward with *kirioroshi*. As shown in Figure 10P-10, *kirioroshi* is completed with the feet together in *iaigoshi*. Remain facing 45 degrees to the left of your original direction, step back with your left foot into a "power stance" as you perform *Eishin-Ryū chiburi* and *Okuden nōtō*, slide your left foot up to meet your right foot, pivot 45 degrees to your right, then step back to your original starting position.

The *bunkai* for this variation of *Ukenagashi* is identical to that for the *Shoden* version, except that it occurs in a standing position. Your opponent is directly in front of you, with his sword drawn and ready as you approach. As you come within his striking range, you step to your right and begin to draw, apparently exposing yourself to attack. As your opponent strikes at what he perceives as your vulnerability, you draw, block, and counter-attack in a single motion.

The sidestepping and twisting motion employed in the blocking phase of *Ukenagashi* is called *tenshin* (position shift), and is used to throw the opponent off balance by suddenly removing the resistance he expects to meet with his powerful *kirioroshi*. This is the reason you must turn and

step to your left during *kirioroshi*, since your opponent's momentum will carry him stumbling forward to about this point after failing to meet the anticipated resistance of your block.

Figures 10P-1 through 10P-12 Okuden Tachiwaza: Ukenagashi

ITOMAGOI

Farewell Visit

The aptly named *Itomagoi Waza* are three slightly different variations of a single theme. They are conceptually the same as the *Shoden Waza Nukiuchi*, or the *Chūden Waza Makkō*, differing only in nuances of their execution.

One difference common to all three *Itomagoi Waza* is that the continuous motion—*nukitsuke, furikaburi, kirioroshi*—is performed even more quickly than in *Makkō*.

Another shared difference, of course, is that the *Itomagoi Waza* employ *Okuden nōtō*.

Although they are normally included as *Tachiwaza* in the *Eishin-Ryū* curriculum, the *Itomagoi Waza* are all performed in *seiza* position, just as their *Shoden* and *Chūden* counterparts. They are differentiated from each other simply by being numbered *Ichi* (One), *Ni* (Two), and *San* (Three).

10Q: ITOMAGOI ICHI

Begin in *seiza* posture (Figure 10Q-1) by taking the customary three cleansing breaths.

As you finish inhaling the third time, begin to bow by leaning slightly forward and moving your hands toward floor. Then, immediately grasp the *tsuka* and perform *koiguchi no kirikata* and draw the sword straight up so that *nukitsuke* and *furikaburi* occur in a single motion as you rise up tall on your knees and get set on the balls of your feet (Figure 10Q-3 through Figure 10Q-7). As in *Nukiuchi* and *Makkō*, do not allow your sword to strike the floor during *kirioroshi*. Use *Eishin-Ryū chiburi* (simultaneously retracting your knees to normal *seiza* width) and *Okuden nōtō*. Remain on the balls of your feet during *nōtō* and gradually settle back onto your heels just as the *tsuba* meets your left hand. After you slide your right hand to the *tsuka-gashira*, rise up slightly, flatten your feet against the floor, and lower yourself into *seiza* position.

Bunkai for *Itomagoi Ichi* is identical to that of *Nukiuchi* or *Makkō*. You are on a *jōiuchi* mission to capture or execute the enemy seated in front of you in

formal *seiza* posture. In this more subtle situation, your foe suspects that you may be under such orders, so he waits for you to bow. As you begin to bow, he follows, giving you the split-second opportunity to draw and strike in a sudden and continuous motion.

Figures 10Q-1 through 10Q-15 Okuden Tachiwaza: Itomagoi Ichi

10R: ITOMAGOI NI

Itomagoi Ni is identical to *Itomagoi Ichi* except the extent to which you begin to bow. From *seiza* posture (Figure 10R-1), begin by taking the customary three cleansing breaths.

As you finish inhaling the third time, begin to bow by leaning slightly forward and placing your hands on the floor, just as you would for a normal *zarei*. The moment your hands touch the floor, immediately grasp the *tsuka* and perform *koiguchi no kirikata*, rise, and draw the sword straight up so that *nukitsuke* and *furikaburi* occur in a single motion exactly as in *Itomagoi Ichi*, followed immediately with *kirioroshi*. The *waza* ends with *Eishin-Ryū chiburi*, *Okuden nōtō*, and your return to seiza posture exactly as in *Itomagoi Ichi*. Since the rest of the *waza* is presented in Figures 10Q-3 through 10Q-15 above, shown below is only the portion of *Itomagoi Ni* that is different: the initiation of the bow.

Figures 10R-1 through 10R-6 Okuden Tachiwaza: Itomagoi Ni

Bunkai for *Itomagoi Ni* is identical to that of *Itomagoi Ichi*, except that your enemy is even more suspicious of you than his counterpart in *Itomagoi Ichi*. In this case, he hesitates until your hands touch the floor in preparation to bow, so that you are beginning to bend forward in your bow before he returns your bow. Once again, you have a split-second opportunity to draw and strike in order to carry out your orders.

10S: ITOMAGOI SAN

Itomagoi San takes the situation a degree further than *Itomagoi Ichi* and *Ni*, so the only difference is the extent of your initial bow. From *seiza* posture (Figure 10Q-1), take the customary three cleansing breaths. As you finish inhaling the third time, you bow fully in *zarei*. Pause for a moment, then complete the *waza* exactly as in *Itomagoi Ichi* and *Itomagoi Ni*. Conclude with *Eishin-Ryū chiburi*, *Okuden nōtō*, and a return to *seiza*. Once again, only the extent of the bow is depicted below, since the remainder of the *waza* is identical to the other *Itomagoi Waza*.

Figures 10S-1 through 10S-3 Okuden Tachiwaza: Itomagoi San

Bunkai for *Itomagoi San* is identical to that of *Itomagoi Ichi* and *Ni*, except that in this case your enemy is completely distrustful of you. He therefore waits until you have performed a full bow before he follows suit. But honor requires that he return your bow, giving you a split-second chance to fulfill your *jōiuchi* mission.

CONCLUSION

As with the *Ōmori-Ryū Seiza Waza*, many of the *Okuden Tachiwaza* had different names prior to changes made by Grandmaster Ōe Masamichi (the seventeenth grandmaster of *Eishin-Ryū*):

Present Name	Previous Name
1. *Yukizure*	*Yukizure* (Escorted)
2. *Tsuredachi*	*Tsuredachi* (Companions)
3. *Sōmakuri*	*Gohōgiri* (Five-Way Cut)
4. *Sōdome*	*Hanashiuchi* (Severing Strikes)
5. *Shinobu*	*Yoru no Tachi* (Night Sword)
6. *Yukichigai*	*Yukichigai* (Passing By)
7. *Sode Surigaeshi*	*Ken no Koto* (Brushing Sword)
8. *Moniri*	*Kakuresute* (Ambushed)
9. *Kabezoe*	*Hito Naka* (In the Middle)
10. *Ukenagashi*	*Yurumi Nuki* (Relaxed Draw)
11. *Itomagoi*	*Itomagoi* (Farewell Visit)

奥伝坐業

Chapter II

Okuden Suwariwaza

Suwariwaza

The *Okuden Suwariwaza*, like the *Okuden Tachiwaza*, were part of *Hayashizaki-Ryū* during its formative years. They too were modified by Hasegawa Eishin to adapt their techniques to the modern shorter sword design.

All of the *Okuden Suwariwaza* begin in *tatehiza* (standing knee) posture. If you have practiced the *Chūden Waza* for several months before moving on to the *Okuden* series, you may by now find *tatehiza* more comfortable than before. The introductory material in Chapter 9 presents a detailed description of the *tatehiza* position.

Like all other *Okuden* techniques, the *Suwariwaza* exclusively employ *Eishin-Ryū chiburi* (the "flicking" type) and *Okuden nōtō*, as described in Chapter 7. Since *Okuden Waza* should not be attempted until the *Chūden Waza* have been practiced extensively and these elements now thoroughly familiar to the reader, *chiburi* and *nōtō* have been presented for review only for the first *Suwariwaza, Kasumi*, then omitted from the photographic sequences for the remainder of this chapter.

11A: KASUMI

Haze

The first *Okuden Suwariwaza, Kasumi* begins facing straight ahead in *tatehiza* posture (see Figure 11A-1) while taking the three preparatory breaths.

As you finish inhaling the third time, raise your hands to the *tsuka*, with the left hand gripping the *saya* just before your right hand grasps the *tsuka*, and perform *koiguchi no kirikata* and *nukitsuke*. In this instance, rather than

Figures 11A-1 through 11A-17 Okuden Suwariwaza: Kasumi

finishing *nukitsuke* with the *kissaki* pointing back toward your opponent's position, allow the blade's momentum to carry it well to your right, as shown in Figure 11A-5. Turn the sword and sweep it back to your left side at knee level, scooting your left knee forward for additional reach, in a movement called *kirikaeshi* (returning cut), as illustrated in Figures 11A-6 through 11A-8. Perform *furikaburi,* then step forward with the right foot for *kirioroshi*. Conclude with *Eishin-Ryū chiburi* and *Okuden nōtō*.

In *Okuden Suwariwaza*, your right foot slides rearward during *nōtō*, in much the same manner as in the *Chūden Waza*, with one exception: you begin sliding your right foot back *after* you have finished the rapid stage of *Okuden nōtō*. Thereafter, the retracting foot keeps pace with the slow and steady insertion of the *katana* into its *saya*. As your right heel comes into line with your left knee, the sword should be about 80 percent sheathed and, without changing the speed of the moving foot or the remaining *nōtō*, trace a small clockwise circle and come to rest beside your left heel just as the *tsuba* contacts your left hand, as shown in Figure 11A-14).

From this position, step forward with your right foot, then rise to a standing position (in *iaigoshi*), sliding your left foot forward to meet your right. Take two or three steps back to reach your original starting position. At this point, now standing fully erect, remove your right hand from the *tsuka-gashira* and return it to your right side while your left hand releases the *saya* and *tsuba* and returns to your left side.

The *bunkai* of *Kasumi* is identical to the *Chūden Waza*, *Yokogumo*. However, as an *Okuden Waza*, it takes the situation to a deeper level. You are being attacked by an opponent who is directly in front of you. Anticipating his action, you are able to draw more quickly than he, but he recoils, avoiding your attempted slash at his eyes, so you immediately shift to *kirikaeshi*, cutting his leg to immobilize him while you prepare for and execute *kirioroshi*. *Kasumi*, translated here as "haze," possibly gets its name from the blur of motion in which *nukitsuke* flows into *kirikaeshi*, and then into *furikaburi* and *kirioroshi* in a continuous sequence.

11B: SUNEGAKOI

Shin Protection

The second *Okuden Waza*, *Sunegakoi* begins facing straight ahead in *tatehiza* posture while you take your three preparatory breaths. At the top of the third breath, begin *nukitsuke*, drawing the *tsuka* at a downward angle. Complete *nukitsuke* by rising as you draw—stepping back with your left foot—and blocking in front of your right leg (with the blade edge forward) as shown in Figure 11B-5.

Drop to one knee, right foot leading, during *furikaburi*, then shuffle forward while performing *kirioroshi*, finishing with *Eishin-Ryū chiburi* and *Okuden nōtō*. Rise to standing position and step back to your starting point.

Bunkai for *Sunegakoi* is identical to its *Chūden* counterpart, *Tora no Issoku*. In fact, the only differences between the two are that *Sunegakoi* is performed more quickly than *Tora no Issoku*, and uses *Okuden nōtō*. In both instances, your attacker is directly in front of you, and you have not beaten

Figures 11B-1 through 11B-8 Okuden Suwariwaza: Sunegakoi

him to the draw. Instead, you must use *nukitsuke* to block his *nukitsuke* attack directed at your leading leg, then counterattack with *kirioroshi*.

11C: SHIHŌGIRI

Four-Way Cut

In the third *Suwariwaza*, *Shihōgiri*, you begin by facing straight ahead in *tatehiza* posture while performing *kokyū*. At the top of the third breath, begin *koiguchi no kirikata*, then step at a 45-degree angle to your right-front as you begin *nukitsuke* and finish *nukitsuke* by turning your hips left to perform a level thrust at a 45-degree angle to your left-rear, as shown in Figure 11C-5. Turn your upper body back toward the right-front during *furikaburi*, then shuffle forward while performing *kirioroshi* at 45 degrees to your right-front (Figure 11C-7). Turn 90 degrees to your left while raising the sword in *furikaburi*, and step forward (right foot front) with *kirioroshi* at 45 degrees to your left-front (Figure 11C-9). Perform *furikaburi* again, while turning 45 degrees to your right, and step forward (right foot front) with *kirioroshi* in the direction you were originally facing (Figure 11C-11). Complete *Shihōgiri* with *Eishin-Ryū chiburi* and *Okuden nōtō*, rise to standing position, and step back to your starting point.

Interestingly, *bunkai* for *Shihōgiri* is usually explained differently than the way in which the *waza* is performed, and this difference deserves detailed examination. In *Shihōgiri*, you are surrounded by attackers on four sides: right-front, left-front, left-rear, and right-rear, whom you must dispatch in order of the imminence of their attack. Their plan is to have the opponent to your right-front grab your *tsuka* to prevent you from defending yourself, while the enemies to your rear attack, followed by the remaining attacker at your front-left. Thus, although it is not usually practiced as a strike, the first movement—rising to begin *nukitsuke*—is considered to *imply* a *tsuka-ate* (handle-strike).

The next most dangerous foe is the one to your left-rear, so you make a lethal thrust past your left shoulder, which would be performed essentially as practiced in this *waza*. The opponent at your right-rear is next in degree of threat, and it is this opponent who is understood to receive the first

kirioroshi in the *waza*, even though it is practiced to the front-right, instead of the right-rear.

Next comes the opponent to your left-front, who has now had time to turn and begin his attack. You must quickly turn and deal him a *kirioroshi*, roughly to the position practiced in the *waza*.

Lastly, having recovered from the agonizing blow to the face from your *tsuka*, the opponent to your right-front receives the final *kirioroshi*, which is delivered to the front-center in the *waza*.

Figures 11C-1 through 11C-11 Okuden Suwariwaza: Shihōgiri

11D: TOZUME

Boxed-in by Doors

Tozume is the fourth in this series of *waza* and begins in *tatehiza* posture facing straight ahead.

After the third breath of *kokyū*, perform *koiguchi no kirikata* and rise, stepping firmly to your right as you complete *nukitsuke* with a downward cut that ends with the blade angled upward at about 45 degrees, as illustrated in Figure 11D-3. During *furikaburi*, turn 90 degrees to your left and step strongly forward with your right foot with *kirioroshi* (Figure 11D-5). Finish with *Eishin-Ryū chiburi* and *Okuden nōtō*, rise, and step back to your starting point.

The *bunkai* for *Tozume* is somewhat subtle. Your two opponents are at angles to your right-front and left-front, but are crouching behind a pair of *byōbu* (folding decorative screens) or *fusuma* (interior sliding doors). The powerful forward step taken on *nukitsuke* and *kirioroshi* is designed to knock down each of these barriers, both hampering your enemy's attack and exposing him to counterattack.

Figures 11D-1 through 11D-5 Okuden Suwariwaza: Tozume

11E: TOWAKI

Beside the Door

The fifth *Okuden Waza*, *Towaki*, involves a situation very similar to that dealt with in *Tozume*. Once again, you begin facing straight ahead in *tate-hiza* during *kokyū*. As you inhale the third cleansing breath, look to your right (at about a 45-degree angle) as you grasp the *tsuka* with both hands, then step at a 45-degree angle to your right as you rise to one knee and draw the blade forward, then thrust back past your left shoulder at a 45-degree angle to your left-rear (Figure 11E-4). Immediately turn to your right-front as you raise your sword in *furikaburi*, then step forward with your right foot and execute *kirioroshi*. Conclude with *Eishin-Ryū chiburi* and *Okuden nōtō*, rise, turn 45 degrees to your left while maintaining *iaigoshi*, then step back to your starting point.

The *bunkai* for *Towaki* is similar to that of *Tozume* because your opponents are hiding behind lightweight barriers, waiting for the ideal moment—or perhaps a signal—to attack. In this case, however, one is concealed behind you and one to your front at opposite corners, giving them the greatest advantage in a simultaneous attack. As you sense their presence and intent, you draw and stab to the rear, thrusting through one *byōbu* or *fusuma*, then step forward, knocking the second screen down onto the other attacker as you defend with *kirioroshi*.

Figures 11E-1 through 11E-6 Okuden Suwariwaza: Towaki

11F: TANASHITA

Beneath a Shelf

Tanashita is the sixth *waza* of the *Okuden* series. It begins in *tatehiza*, facing directly to the right. To perform this *waza* with the proper feeling, it is important to understand its *bunkai*. *Tanashita* takes its name literally, since you are crouching beneath a shelf, such as those common in Japanese gardens, or perhaps a raised porch of the type which customarily surrounded a Japanese home or teahouse in feudal times.

As you take your third cleansing breath, raise your hands to the *tsuka* for *koiguchi no kirikata*. As you begin to draw your sword, take a long, crouching step forward with your right foot, sliding it along the floor. As shown in Figure 11F-3, be sure to keep your head low, as if hunkered beneath a low overhang. When the *kissaki* clears the *koiguchi*, remain crouched low and draw your left foot forward until your left knee is beside your right heel as you raise the sword over your back in a modified *furikaburi* (see Figure 11F-5). Push with your left foot as you take another long step forward with

Figures 11F-1 through 11F-7 Okuden Suwariwaza: Tanashita

your right foot, straightening your back only as your weight comes to bear on your front leg and you perform *kirioroshi* (Figure 11F-7). As your momentum carries you onto your front leg, allow your rear leg to slide forward into the normal kneeling posture shown.

Your movements should have the feeling and appearance of emerging from beneath the shelf or porch and stepping far enough clear of its overhang to make a full, unobstructed swing during *kirioroshi*. To achieve this requires that you visualize yourself in this situation during practice.

Complete the *waza* with *Eishin-Ryū chiburi* and *Okuden nōtō*, rise to a standing position, and step back to your starting point.

11G: RYŌZUME

Boxed-in on Both Sides

The seventh *Okuden Waza* is *Ryōzume*. The situation in this *waza* is the equivalent of that found in the *Tachiwaza* called *Kabezoe*. You find yourself seated in *tatehiza*, sandwiched between two barriers, and confronted by an opponent directly ahead of you.

As you finish your third cleansing breath, raise your hands to the *tsuka* for *koiguchi no kirikata*, then draw the sword at an upward angle of about 45 degrees as you rise to one foot. When the *kissaki* leaves the *koiguchi*, pull the *tsuka* back toward your navel and grasp it with your left hand, as shown in Figure 11G-4. With a shuffle-step forward, perform a two-handed thrust to the opponent's midsection. Pull back on the *tsuka* again to withdraw the blade from the adversary, then raise the sword in *furikaburi*, take another shuffle-step forward, and finish with *kirioroshi*.

Due to the tight confines for which this technique was designed, *chiburi* has been modified for *Ryōzume*. By bending your wrist upward, raise the *kissaki* a few inches while raising the *tsuka* enough to swing it from the inside to the outside of your right leg—keeping the *tsuba* even with your knee—and snap your wrist down, so the *kissaki* again drops slightly below level, finishing as shown in Figure 11G-10.

Nōtō in *Ryōzume* is also adapted to cramped quarters by keeping both elbows close to the body, flipping the kissaki back toward the left shoulder (Figure 11G-11) to initiate *nōtō*, and raising the right hand to about face

Figures 11G-1 through 11G-17 Okuden Suwariwaza: Ryōzume

height during the rapid portion of *nōtō* (Figure 11G-12), rather than keeping it level. Bearing in mind your high degree of vulnerability during *nō tō*, raising the *tsuka* in this fashion allows you to keep your right hand closer to the center of your body and away from the obstruction on your right. After the accelerated portion of *nōtō*, it is completed in the usual fashion, followed by a rise to standing position and a step back to your starting point.

In *Ryōzume*, you are boxed in by walls or obstacles on both sides, making a normal *nukitsuke* impossible. So, when your opponent begins his attack, you instead draw and thrust straight forward, inflicting an abdominal wound that delays your opponent's attack until you can finish with *kirioroshi*.

11H: TORABASHIRI

Running Tiger

The final *Okuden Suwariwaza* is *Torabashiri*, a *tatehiza* technique with similarities to the *Shoden Waza* called *Oikaze*. In *Torabashiri*, your opponent begins a surprise attack, but when he realizes that you can successfully defend yourself, retreats as you rise to your defense. Thus, as you complete your three cleansing breaths, grasp the *tsuka* for *koiguchi no kirikata*, rising on the balls of your feet as shown in Figure 11H-2. In a manner similar to *Oikaze*, take a number of small stutter-steps forward, ending with a normal step with your left foot, then a normal step with your right foot as you complete *nukitsuke* in a standing position (Figure 11H-6).

Crouch down as you raise your *katana* in *furikaburi*, then take a shuffle-step forward as you perform *kirioroshi*.

After *Eishin-Ryū chiburi*, begin *Okuden nōtō*, starting to slide your right foot back. Just before you would normally circle it beneath yourself (Figure 11H-12), a second (concealed) attacker begins an assault. Draw both feet slightly together to gain the best possible footing, then take a number of stutter-steps backward as you begin *nukitsuke* again. Your last step back is a full step with your left foot as you complete *nukitsuke* (Figure 11H-16). Crouch down as you again raise your *katana* in *furikaburi*, then take a

Figures 11H-1 through 11H-18 Okuden Suwariwaza: Torabashiri

shuffle-step forward as you perform another *kirioroshi*. Once again, perform *Eishin-Ryū chiburi* and *Okuden nōtō*, this time completing *nōtō* by sliding your right foot back and circling it beneath yourself as you resheath the sword. Rise to standing position and step back to your starting point.

CONCLUSION

Again, many of the *Suwariwaza* also had different names prior to changes made by Grandmaster Ōe Masamichi (the seventeenth grandmaster of *Eishin-Ryū*):

Present Name	Previous Name
1. *Kasumi*	*Mukōbarai* (Sweep Opponent)
2. *Sunegakoi*	*Tsukadome* (Stop Attack)
3. *Shihōgiri*	*Shisumi* (Four Corners)
4. *Tozume*	*Misumi* (Three Corners)
5. *Towaki*	*Mukōzume* (Boxed-in by Opponents)
6. *Tanashita*	*Tanashita* (Beneath a Shelf)
7. *Ryōzume*	*Ryōzume* (Boxed-in on Both Sides)
8. *Torabashiri*	*Torabashiri* (Running Tiger)

太刀打之位

Chapter 12

Tachiuchi no Kurai

Katachi

It is probable that some form of *kumitachi* (practice fencing) has been part of the regimen of *Eishin-Ryū* from its earliest days, since partner training and contests using *bokken* (wooden swords) in place of *shinken* ("live" swords) has been common practice in most styles of swordsmanship for many centuries.

However, it is likely that the *Tachiuchi no Kurai*—prearranged *bokken* sparring involving two partners—that we currently practice in *Eishin-Ryū* are of relatively recent development, having evolved through alteration, augmentation, and simplification of earlier forms of *kumitachi* as they were passed from one generation to the next.

Each of these *katachi* (patterned drills) was created to promote practice of a key principle of *Eishin-Ryū* under controlled but reasonably realistic conditions.

Prior to practicing the *Tachiuchi no Kurai,* you should perform *Sahō* and *Reihō* just as if you were preparing for any other aspect of *iaijutsu* training. Treat your *bokken* just as you would treat an *iaitō* or *shinken,* by performing *tōrei* as you take up your *bokken* and bowing to your partner.

In a formal setting, the highest level of sincerity and respect is shown by performing your preparation and etiquette in a *seiza* position, facing your partner. In the description of each *katachi,* we are assuming that the partners have already performed these rituals of proper etiquette, so the narrative covers only the techniques of the *katachi* itself.

In each *katachi* one partner practices a key principle of *iaijutsu* and the other partner provides the appropriate attack and defense to facilitate this training. The partner who practices the principle intrinsic to the *katachi* is

called *Shitachi* (User) and the partner assisting is called *Uchitachi* (Receiver). Even though *Shitachi* is the one practicing the key technique of each *katachi,* it is equally important to develop aptitude in the role of *Uchitachi,* both for development of your swordsmanship skills and the refinement of such character traits as humility, cooperation, and self-sacrifice.

Some characteristics common to all ten *Tachiuchi no Kurai* are the *chiburi* and *nōtō. Eishin-Ryū chiburi* is performed at the completion of each *katachi.* This is followed by a simulated *nōtō,* using the left hand to simulate the *koiguchi* and sliding the *bokken* through the opening of the hand as if sheathing it. It is not customary or necessary to slide the *bokken* through your belt to simulate it being in the *saya.*

Another characteristic not found in the *waza* of *Eishin-Ryū* is *kiai*—the loud shout that accompanies each striking motion in the *katachi.* This means that sometimes only *Shitachi* or *Uchitachi* will *kiai,* since only one of the two is using an attacking technique, while the other is blocking. In several cases, however, such as the first attacks of *Deai, Tsukekomi, Ukenagashi, Ukekomi,* and others in which the partners are attacking simultaneously, both partners will *kiai.*

12A: DEAI

The first *katachi, Deai* (First Meeting), is designed to employ the *iaijutsu* fundamentals *nukitsuke* and *kirioroshi* in simulated attack and defense with a training partner.

For safety, however, *Shitachi* will apply *nukitsuke* toward *Uchitachi*'s leg, rather than an eye-level strike, and *Uchitachi* will block the *kirioroshi.* Begin facing your partner at a distance of about eight paces. Both partners perform *kokyū,* just as if preparing to perform a *waza* (see Figure 12A-1), at the completion of which *Uchitachi* (on the left) and *Shitachi* (on the right) simultaneously take three steps toward each other. On the second step, each grasps the *tsuka* with their right hand in preparation for *nukitsuke. Shitachi*'s *nukitsuke* is directed toward *Uchitachi*'s right knee, while *Uchitachi*'s *nukitsuke* blocks this strike (Figure 12A-5). While *Shitachi* draws his left foot even with his right and performs *furikaburi, Uchitachi* draws his right foot back to his left while taking *seigan no kamae. Shitachi* continues

forward with *kirioroshi* while *Uchitachi* steps back and blocks this strike as shown in Figure 12A-8.

Each *katachi* concludes in the same manner: both participants separate while maintaining *zanshin* and step back to their original starting positions, about eight paces apart, each person ending with the right foot forward. Normally, this requires three steps backward by each partner. In practice, maintaining *zanshin* means that both partners assume *seigan no kamae* as they separate, being certain that the partner never has an opening in which to strike. Once back at their original starting positions, each partner levels his sword and pushes his hips slightly forward, then performs *Eishin-Ryū chiburi.*

Both perform *nōtō* (customarily *Uchitachi* begins *nōtō* slightly before *Shitachi*), drawing their rear foot forward in *iaigoshi* as their swords are "sheathed" into their left hands, slide their right hands down to the *tsukagashira,* then rise to a full standing position.

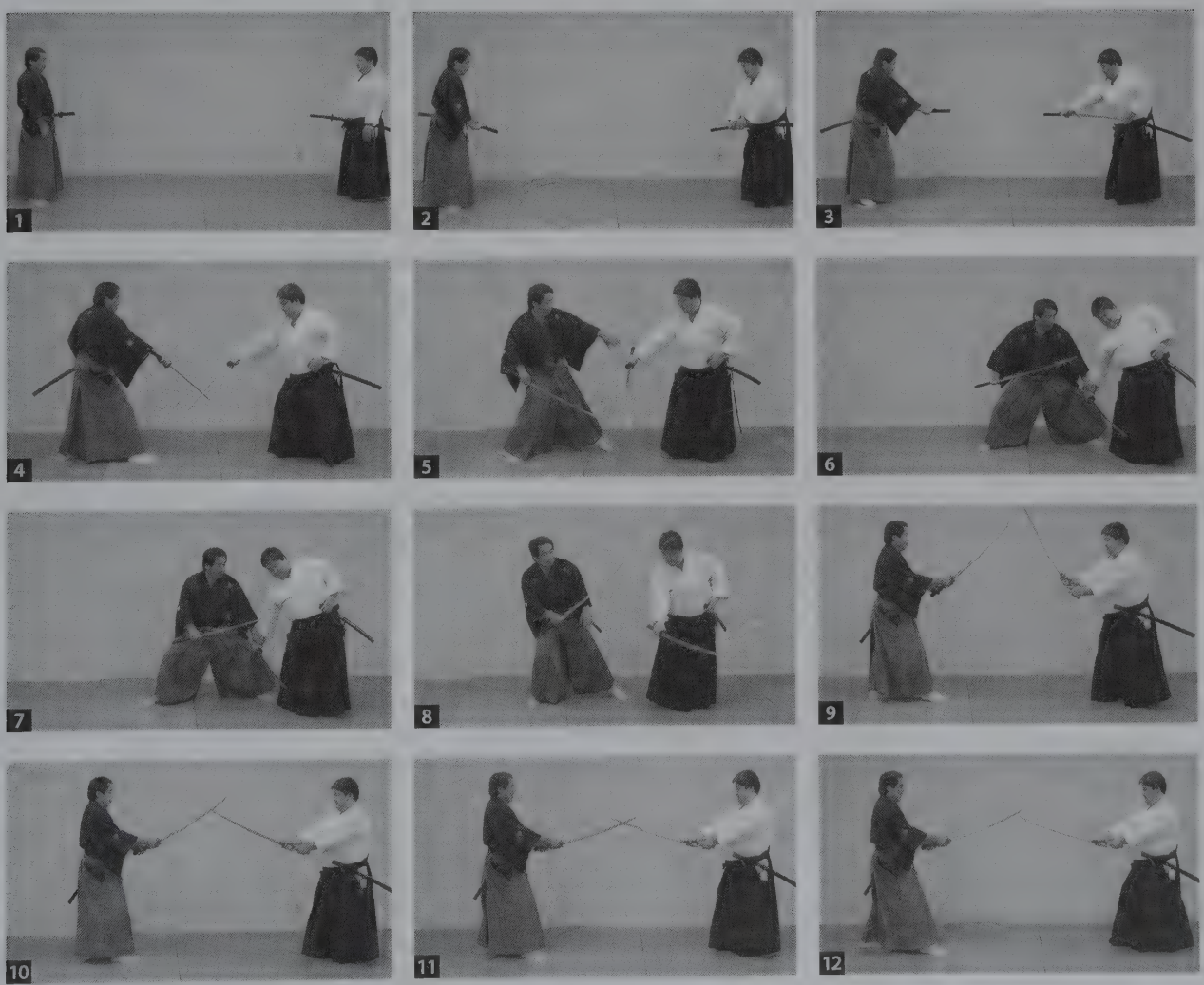
Figures 12A-1 through 12A-9 Tachiuchi no Kurai: Deai

Figures 12A-10 through 12A-22 Tachiuchi no Kurai: Deai

12B: TSUKEKOMI

The second *katachi, Tsukekomi* (Seize Advantage) provides practice of the principle of quickly seizing the initiative and advantage as an opponent attempts to retreat from an unsuccessful attack.

Both partners perform *kokyū,* just as if preparing to perform a *waza* (see Figure 12B-1), at the completion of which *Uchitachi* (on the left) and *Shitachi* (on the right) simultaneously take three steps toward each other. The initial strike is similar to *Deai,* except that the roles are reversed. *Uchitachi*'s *nukitsuke* is directed toward *Shitachi*'s right knee, while *Shitachi*'s *nukitsuke* blocks this strike (Figure 12B-4). At this point, *Uchitachi* begins to draw



Figures 12B-1 through 12B-12 Tachiuchi no Kurai: Tsukekomi

away, so *Shitachi* quickly steps forward with his left foot and seizes *Uchitachi*'s right hand (Figures 12B-5 and 12B-6, gripping it as shown in Figure 12B-6, with the thumb at the base of *Uchitachi*'s little finger and the index and middle fingers between *Uchitachi*'s index finger and thumb to ensure control of the wrist. *Shitachi* finishes with a thrust to the ribs (Figure 12B-7) that would, if extended fully, penetrate the lungs and pericardium.

To separate from this position with *zanshin, Shitachi* must push *Uchitachi*'s hand aside with the first step back to ensure that *Uchitachi* cannot counterstrike. Both partners return to their starting positions, perform *chiburi* and *nōtō* as previously described, and rise to a standing position.

Figures 12B-13 through 12B-22 Tachiuchi no Kurai: Tsukekomi

12C: UKENAGASHI

The principle practiced in *Ukenagashi* (Flowing Block) is that found in several *Eishin-Ryū Waza:* allowing the opponent's attack to slide off an angled parry, then counterstriking in a continuous flowing motion before the attacker can recover his balance.

The partners begin, facing each other about eight paces apart, with *kokyū,* then both *Shitachi* and *Uchitachi* draw their *bokken,* stepping forward with their right feet into *seigan no kamae.* As *Uchitachi* next takes a step forward with his left foot, *Shitachi* takes a step back to maintain their separation, both assuming *hassō no kamae.* From this point (Figure 12C-5), *Uchitachi* steps slowly forward, if necessary, to close within attacking distance of *Shitachi.* After a pause, *Uchitachi* steps forward with a *yokomen-uchi* strike aimed at *Shitachi*'s left temple, which *Shitachi* steps forward to meet with an identical strike. Thus, they clash in the middle, as shown in Figure 12C-8. Here, *Shitachi* begins to press forward with a thrust to *Uchitachi*'s face, which *Uchitachi* steps back to evade, swinging his sword in a counterclockwise arch with a *yokomen-uchi* strike aimed at *Shitachi*'s right temple. *Shitachi* meets this by stepping forward with a mirror-image *yokomen-uchi,* after which *Shitachi* begins to drop his blade to strike at *Uchitachi*'s exposed left hand, which *Uchitachi* avoids by shuffling back and taking *jōdan no kamae. Uchitachi* steps forward with *kirioroshi,* but *Shitachi* responds by shuffling left with *ukenagashi,* raising the *katana* to take *Uchitachi*'s *kirioroshi* as a glancing strike that propels *Shitachi*'s blade in a fierce arc that ends with *kirioroshi* to *Uchitachi*'s head (Figure 12C-18). The partners then separate with *zanshin* and return to their starting positions in the customary manner.

Figures 12C-1 through 12C-18 Tachiuchi no Kurai: Ukenagashi

Figures 12C-19 through 12C-33 Tachiuchi no Kurai: Ukenagashi

12D: UKEKOMI

Ukekomi (Block and Move In) is the fourth *katachi*, which employs a different type of counterattack to a situation almost identical to *Ukenagashi*.

The partners again face each other about eight paces apart during *kokyū*, then both *Shitachi* and *Uchitachi* draw their *bokken*, stepping for-

Figures 12D-1 through 12D-15 Tachiuchi no Kurai: Ukekomi

ward with their right feet into *seigan no kamae.* As *Uchitachi* next takes a step forward with his left foot, *Shitachi* takes a step back to maintain their separation, both assuming *hassō no kamae.* After a pause, *Uchitachi* steps forward with a *yokomen-uchi* strike aimed at *Shitachi*'s left temple, which *Shitachi* steps forward to meet with an identical strike. As in *Ukenagashi,* they

Figures 12D-16 through 12D-30 Tachiuchi no Kurai: Ukekomi

clash in the middle, as shown in Figure 12C-8. Here, *Shitachi* begins to press forward with a thrust to *Uchitachi*'s face, which *Uchitachi* steps back to evade, swinging his sword in a counterclockwise arch with a *yokomen-uchi* strike aimed at *Shitachi*'s right temple. *Shitachi* meets this by stepping forward with a mirror-image *yokomen-uchi,* after which *Shitachi* begins to drop his blade to strike at *Uchitachi*'s exposed left hand. This time, however, as *Uchitachi* steps back into *jōdan no kamae, Shitachi* immediately steps in with an upward *kiriageru* slash to *Uchitachi*'s armpit (which in application would be *gyaku-kesagiri,* slicing *Uchitachi* from left hip to right shoulder). The partners then separate with *zanshin* and return to their starting positions in the customary manner.

12E: TSUKIKAGE

The fifth *katachi, Tsukikage* (Moon Shadow), primarily teaches a technique of calculating and dodging an opponent's strike, which provides essential training in sensing and reacting to an opponent's movement, reach, and timing.

The training partners face each other at a distance of about eight paces apart. On their third cleansing breaths, both *Shitachi* and *Uchitachi* draw their *bokken,* stepping forward with their right feet into *seigan no kamae.* Taking a step forward with the left foot, *Uchitachi* assumes *hassō no kamae,* but *Shitachi* remains in *seigan.* After a brief pause, *Shitachi* drops the *kissaki* to *gedan no kamae,* creating an apparent opening to attack. When *Uchitachi* attacks toward *Shitachi*'s left temple, *Shitachi* raises his sword to block the attack. Both then shuffle slightly forward, pushing their swords *tsuba*-to-*tsuba* (called *tsuba-zeria* in Japanese), as depicted in Figure 12E-11.

In this position, both partners must be sensitive to each other's strength and match it exactly. In a real battle, this would be a crucial opportunity for victory. If one slacks off slightly, the other could easily push through with a thrust or short slice to the throat. Therefore, each partner must exactly match the other's intensity. Using this sensitivity, both partners simultaneously push away from each other, stepping back with their right feet into *waki no kamae,* as shown in Figure 12E-14. Again, it is essential that both partners push simultaneously and with equal power. If

Figures 12E-1 through 12E-18 Tachiuchi no Kurai: Tsukikage

Figures 12E-19 through 12E-35 Tachiuchi no Kurai: Tsukikage

either the timing or strength of the push is off, one partner will be toppled and the other will gain instant victory. From this position, *Uchitachi* steps forward with a cut to *Shitachi*'s forward leg. With a sharp twist of the hips, *Shitachi* draws his feet together, pulling the forward leg out of reach of *Uchitachi*'s attempted cut (Figure 12E-18) and, the moment *Uchitachi*'s *bokken* passes, steps forward with the right foot to deliver *kirioroshi* (Figure 12E-24).

The critical element of this *katachi* is the timing of this evasion and counterattack by *Shitachi*. If *Shitachi* moves prematurely, *Uchitachi* could adjust the attack to succeed, so *Shitachi* cannot react until *Uchitachi* is sufficiently committed to the attack that its path cannot be altered. This means the attack will barely miss the forward leg—applying the concept of *issun no maai*. Likewise, if the counterattack is not made the moment *Uchitachi*'s attack misses, *Uchitachi* will be able to recover and block it.

Following the decisive *kirioroshi,* both *Shitachi* and *Uchitachi* conclude the *katachi* by returning to to their respective starting points in the customary manner.

12F: SUIGETSUTŌ

Suigetsutō (Solar Plexus Thrust) is the sixth *katachi* and is used to practice a deflection and continuous-motion counterattack against a thrust to the solar plexus.

The partners again face each other about eight paces apart during *kokyū;* then both *Shitachi* and *Uchitachi* draw their *bokken,* stepping forward with their right feet into *seigan no kamae.* As *Uchitachi* next takes a step forward with his left foot, *Shitachi* takes a step back to maintain their separation, both assuming *hassō no kamae.* After making any necessary adjustment to the attacking distance, *Uchitachi* steps forward with *yokomen-uchi* strike aimed at *Shitachi*'s left temple, which *Shitachi* steps forward to meet with an identical strike. Thus, they clash in the middle, as shown in Figure 12F-8. Here, *Shitachi* begins to press forward with a thrust to *Uchitachi*'s face, which *Uchitachi* steps back to evade, swinging his sword in a counterclockwise arch with a *yokomen-uchi* strike aimed at *Shitachi*'s right temple. *Shitachi* meets this by stepping forward with a mirror-image *yokomen-uchi,*

Figures 12F-1 through 12F-18 Tachiuchi no Kurai: Suigetsutō

Figures 12F-19 through 12F-33 Tachiuchi no Kurai: Suigetsutō

after which *Shitachi* begins to drop his blade to strike at *Uchitachi*'s exposed left hand. This time, however, *Uchitachi* responds stepping back and circling his blade clockwise with another *yokomen-uchi* aimed at *Shitachi*'s left temple, which is once more met by *Shitachi* in mirror image. Now *Shitachi* begins yet another thrust at *Uchitachi,* which *Uchitachi* evades by stepping back while maintaining *seigan no kamae.*

The moment *Uchitachi*'s retreating foot touches the floor, he pushes forward with a thrust to *Shitachi*'s solar plexus (Figure 12F-16). *Shitachi* raises his hands slightly, so that *Uchitachi*'s thrust is deflected to his right while he shuffles slightly to his left, completing *furikaburi* and *kirioroshi* in a circular, fluid motion (Figure 12F-19). The partners then separate with *zanshin* and return to their starting positions in the customary manner.

12G: ZETSUMYŌKEN

The seventh *katachi* is *Zetsumyōken* (Unbeatable Sword), which is used to practice a *tsuka-ate* (handle-strike) technique.

The partners face each other about eight paces apart during *kokyū,* then both *Shitachi* and *Uchitachi* draw their *bokken,* stepping forward with their right feet into *seigan no kamae.* Taking a step forward with the left foot, *Uchitachi* assumes *hassō no kamae,* while *Shitachi* steps backward with the right foot into *hassō no kamae.* If necessary, *Uchitachi* will step or shuffle forward while in *hassō no kamae* to close within attacking distance. After a brief pause, *Uchitachi* attacks toward *Shitachi*'s temple, and *Shitachi* steps back, blocking the attack with a mirror-image strike toward Uchitachi's temple Both then shuffle forward, pushing their swords *tsuka*-to-*tsuka* (or *tsuka-zeria*) as depicted in Figure 12G-1.

Note that this position is slightly different from *tsuba-zeria,* which was performed in *Tsukikage.* The balance of opposing forces is maintained in the handles, with the contact point between *Shitachi*'s and *Uchitachi*'s hands, rather than just above the *tsuba.* This causes the swords to be nearly vertical and the partners more closely positioned.

Using the *tsuka* as a fulcrum, *Shitachi* steps left foot forward and pivots the sword suddenly, so its *kissaki* swings downward and the *tsuka* swings sharply upward, pushing *Uchitachi*'s hands up with it. *Shitachi*

Figures 12G-1 through 12G-18 Tachiuchi no Kurai: Zetsumyōken

Figures 12G-19 through 12G-28
Tachiuchi no Kurai: Zetsumyōken

immediately follows with a strike to *Uchitachi*'s face with the butt of the *tsuka* (*tsuka-ate*).

The matched force of *Uchitachi* in *tsuka-zeria* against *Shitachi* provides the vulnerability that makes this technique work. The moment *Shitachi*'s sword pivots, the sudden release of *Uchitachi*'s own pushing force causes his sword to ride up over *Shitachi*'s. This, coupled with the leverage *Shitachi* gains, creates the break in *Uchitachi*'s balance and the opening to the face which allows *Shitachi* to make the strike. The *katachi* ends at this point, since the stunned *Uchitachi* could be easily finished by any technique of *Shitachi*'s choosing. Both *Shitachi* and *Uchitachi* step back to their respective starting points in the usual manner.

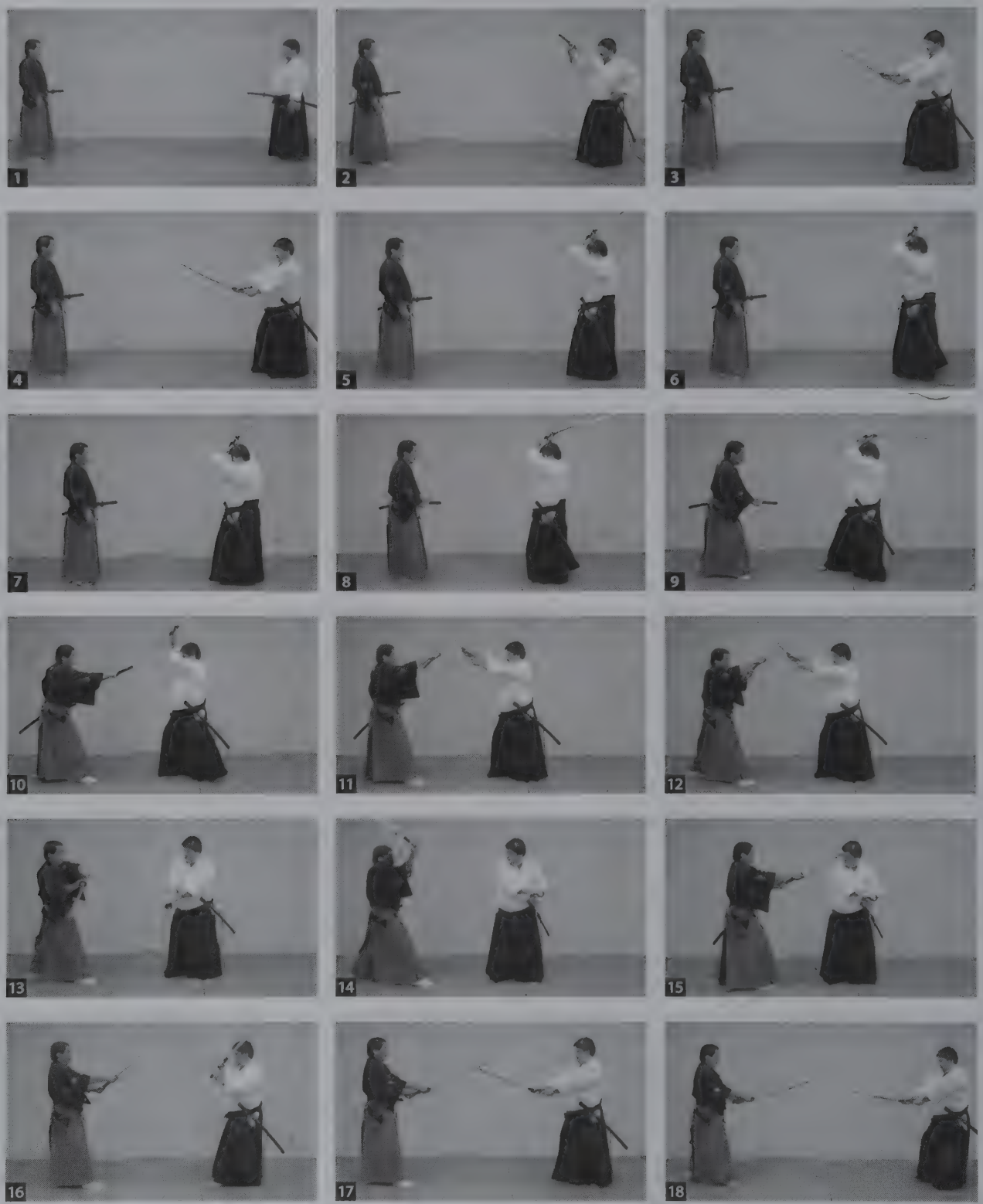
12H: DOKUMYŌKEN

Eighth in the *Tachiuchi no Kurai* is *Dokumyōken* (Miraculous Sword), which incorporates one of the most difficult techniques found in the *katachi*.

On their third cleansing breaths both *Shitachi* and *Uchitachi* draw their *bokken,* stepping forward with their right feet into *seigan no kamae.* With *Uchitachi* stepping forward and *Shitachi* stepping back to maintain their separation, both partners raise their swords to *hassō no kamae. Uchitachi* attacks to *Shitachi*'s temple while *Shitachi* steps back with a mirror-image counterattack, so that both meet in the middle. *Uchitachi* then steps forward and attacks to *Shitachi*'s right temple, so *Shitatchi* steps back and meets this with a mirror-image counterattack, again stymieing *Uchitachi*'s attack. Now *Uchitachi* steps forward with *kirioroshi,* which *Shitachi* steps back and blocks overhead using his left hand to reinforce against the strength of *Uchitachi*'s strike (Figure 12H-15). With a powerful twist of the hips, *Shitachi* sweeps *Uchitachi*'s blade aside to the right (Figures 12H-16 through 12H-18), then steps forward with a reinforced thrust to *Uchitachi*'s exposed right side (Figure 12H-21), using the left hand to guide the *kissaki* to its target. *Shitachi* now steps forward, forcing *Uchitachi* to step back, as both take *seigan no kamae,* then both return to their starting points in the usual fashion.

Figures 12H-1 through 12H-18 Tachiuchi no Kurai: Dokumyōken

Figures 12H-19 through 12H-34 Tachiuchi no Kurai: Dokumyōken



Figures 121-1 through 121-18 Tachiuchi no Kurai: Shinmyōken

121: SHINMYŌKEN

Shinmyōken (Clear Mind Sword) is the ninth *katachi* and also presents a high degree of difficulty in terms of *Shitachi*'s timing to parry *Uchitachi*'s attack.

After *kokyū, Uchitachi* draws, stepping forward with the right foot into *seigan no kamae.* Taking a step forward with the left foot, *Uchitachi* raises the sword to *jōdan no kamae* and steps toward *Shitachi* to close within attacking distance. *Shitachi* does not draw or take a defensive posture. After a brief pause, *Uchitachi* steps forward with the right foot and attacks with *kirioroshi* toward *Shitachi*'s head. Now *Shitachi* draws, using *nukitsuke* to block the *kirioroshi* and, in a continuous, fluid motion, deflects *Uchitachi*'s

Figures 121-19 through 121-29 Tachiuchi no Kurai: Shinmyōken

strike to the right side, grasping the *tsuka* with the left hand and continuing around in a circular motion to finish with a cut to *Uchitachi*'s neck.

Additional detail of this portion of the *katachi* is shown below. Notice how the left hand is added once the block has been completed (Figure 12J-2) and how the wrists are twisted clockwise as *Uchitachi*'s sword is swept aside, adding power and momentum to the technique (Figures 12J-4 through 12J-6).

A temptation when performing this *katachi* is to begin the parry-and-counterattack motion before the block has been fully effective. If *Uchitachi* is performing the *kirioroshi* with realistic follow-through, this timing error can result in a painful knot on *Shitachi*'s head.

Both *Shitachi* and *Uchitachi* step back to their respective starting points in the usual manner.

Figures 12J-1 through 12J-6 Tachiuchi no Kurai: Shinmyōken

12K: UCHIKOMI

Uchikomi (Clash Together) is the final technique of the *Tachiuchi no Kurai,* and it appears to be deceptively simple.

On their third *kokyū* breaths, both *Shitachi* and *Uchitachi* draw their *bokken,* stepping forward with their right feet into *seigan no kamae.* Both then raise their swords to *hassō no kamae,* with *Uchikomi* taking a step forward as he does so, and *Shitachi* taking a step back to maintain their separation. *Uchitachi* steps forward with a strike to *Shitachi*'s temple and *Shitachi* follows suit, meeting the attack with a mirror-image strike to *Uchitachi*'s temple. Both shuffle forward to *tsuba-zeria* (*tsuba*-to-*tsuba* standoff). As with *Tsukikage,* it is essential that both partners be sensitive to each other's strength to maintain equilibrium and not provide an opportunity for the other to attack. In fact, this is the essence of *Uchikomi,* which ends in a draw. So this sensitivity and matching force are even more pronounced. Both partners gradually slacken the force of their pushing. In a real battle, each would be sensitive to the other's possible treachery, so they must recede from one another at exactly the same pace, feeling their partner's intentions as registered by the exertion against the clashed swords as a quintessential expression of *zanshin.*

As the mutual force becomes minimal, *Uchitachi* and *Shitachi* simultaneously step apart, returning to their respective starting points in *seigan no kamae,* then performing perform *chiburi* and *nōtō* to conclude in the customary manner.

At the conclusion of *Tachiuchi no Kurai* practice, you should perform *Sahō* and *Reihō* just as you did at the beginning, but in reverse order.

To demonstrate the utmost mutual respect, the partners would sit in *seiza* posture, perform *tōrei* to their swords and *zarei* to each other, treating their *bokken* just as they would treat an *iaitō* or *shinken.*

In less formal settings, it is sufficient to simply perform a standing bow to each other, followed by a standing *tōrei* and *hairei* prior to leaving the *dōjō.*

Figures 12K-1 through 12K-15 Tachiuchi no Kurai: Uchikomi

Figures 12K-16 through 12K-28 Tachiuchi no Kurai: Uchikomi

Chapter 13

Zen Nippon Kendō Renmei

Seitei Iai Kata

全日本剣道連盟 制定居合

SEITEI KATA

The *Zen Nippon Kendō Renmei Seitei Iai Kata* are presented separately in this book, because they are not technically part of the *Eishin-Ryū* system. They are a development of the *Zen Nippon Kendō Renmei* (All-Japan *Kendō* Federation) for use by its members. For this reason, we often refer to this series of techniques as the *Seitei Kata* (standard patterns) to clearly distinguish them from the true *Eishin-Ryū Waza*. Another term for these same techniques is *Ken-Ren Kata*—from a contraction of *Kendō Renmei*.

The *Seitei Kata* were first formulated around 1968 to provide a series of *iaidō* techniques for practice by *kendō* students. The *Zen Nippon Kendō Renmei* invited the acknowledged heads of each of the major styles of *iaidō*, including *Musō Jikiden Eishin-Ryū, Hōki-Ryū, Eishin-Ryū, Tamiya-Ryū, Katori Shinden-Ryū,* and *Musō Shinden-Ryū,* to devise a set of standard techniques for practice by *kendō* students. These representatives selected seven techniques which represented their respective styles to comprise the *Seitei Kata*. Representing *Musō Jikiden Eishin-Ryū* at this meeting was its eighteenth grandmaster, Masaoka Kazumi *Shihan*. After about a decade of use, around 1980, three more techniques were added to the *Seitei Kata*, then another two in 2000, bringing their total to the twelve currently in use. In addition to practice by *kendō* students, the *Seitei Kata* are frequently

taught to students of martial arts with an interest in *samurai* swordsmanship, such as *aikidō,* and even occasionally in *karate* schools, as well many styles of *iaidō.*

The techniques used in the *Seitei Kata* are not always performed exactly as they are practiced in the system from which they were borrowed. In several cases, substantial modifications were made for purposes of standardization, or to adapt an underlying principle to a different posture or situation. For this reason, they are often referred to as *kata* (forms or patterns) to distinguish them from the *waza* (techniques) of their respective styles.

As students of *Eishin-Ryū,* our principle reason for practicing the *Seitei Kata* is not for their training value or their principles of attack and defense. In fact, we recommend against training in them for those reasons, because the principles of body movement are not uniform and are sometimes at variance with the theories and practice of *Eishin-Ryū.* Instead, they are included in the *Eishin-Ryū* curriculum—and this book—solely because they are so widely recognized and used frequently in martial arts tournaments in which *iaidō* events are included.

With each category of *Eishin-Ryū Waza,* we included a description of elements that characterize each series. However, due to their nature—as a collection of techniques from a variety of styles—there are few such characteristics with the *Seitei Kata.* The principle characteristic of the *Seitei Kata,* in fact, is probably that they have no singular characteristic! For instance, there is no characteristic method of performing *nōtō* in the *Seitei Kata.*

Since the *Seitei Kata* were drawn from several different styles, each having a different method of *nōtō,* it is generally held that *nōtō* should be performed in the manner usually followed in the style with which you are most familiar. For *Eishin-Ryū* students, this usually means using *Shoden nōtō* while performing the *Seitei Kata.* It is not uncommon, however, to see advanced *Eishin-Ryū* practitioners using *Shoden nōtō* for the *Seiza Kata* and *Okuden nōtō* for the tachiwaza of *Seitei Kata.*

As we introduce each of these *kata,* we will explain its origin and the key feature or principle to be practiced.

13A: SEIZA MAE

The first *waza, Mae* (Front) or *Seiza Mae,* also sometimes called *Seiza Shō men* (Facing Forward), was derived from the *Musō Jikiden Eishin-Ryū Shoden Waza* of the same name. As with its *Eishin-Ryū* namesake, the purpose for including *Mae* is for practice of the major elements of *kihon* in their most basic form. This *kata* is performed identically to its *Shoden* counterpart, with the exception of the footwork involved in *chiburi.*

Mae begins facing straight ahead in *seiza* posture during *kokyū.* As you finish inhaling the third breath, perform *nukitsuke* while rising to one knee, right foot forward. *Furikaburi* and *kirioroshi* are also performed identically to the *Eishin-Ryū* version of *Mae. Ōmori-Ryū* (wet umbrella) *chiburi* follows, but unlike *Eishin-Ryū*'s *Mae,* your rear foot does not slide up to meet your front foot as you rise. Instead, you rise straight up, keeping your feet in place. For this reason, in the *Seitei* version of *Mae,* you should attempt to reach full standing posture (in *iaigoshi,* of course) at the same moment the sword snaps downward. Usually, the sword completes *chiburi* just a moment before you fully rise. While maintaining *zanshin,* slide your left foot slowly and steadily forward until it is even with your right foot, then, with no noticeable shift in balance, slide your right foot back so that your relative foot positions have changed (Figure 13A-13). From this point the *kata* concludes in the same manner as its *Eishin-Ryū* counterpart.

Figures 13A-1 through 13A-15 Seitei Iai Kata: Seiza Mae

The *bunkai* of *Mae* is defense against a single opponent who is attacking from directly in front of you. Sensing the opponent's intention to attack, you use *nukitsuke* to slice across the opponent's eyes, blinding the attacker to provide the split second needed to safely perform *furikaburi* and *kirioroshi*.

Figures 13A-16 through 13A-26
Seitei Iai Kata: Seiza Mae

13B: SEIZA USHIRO

Like *Mae, Seiza Ushiro* (Rear) was derived from the *Musō Jikiden Eishin-Ryū Waza* of the same name and, like *Mae,* the only difference between the *Seitei* and *Shoden* versions is the footwork accompanying *chiburi.*

Perform *kokyū,* then begin *nukitsuke.* As you rise, pivot 180 degrees to your left and step forward with your left foot while performing *nukitsuke.* Follow with *furikaburi* and *kirioroshi,* just as in *Mae,* except with the left foot leading. Use an *Ōmori-Ryū chiburi,* but do not bring the feet together as you would in the *Eishin-Ryū* version of *Ushiro.* Instead, the feet should remain apart as you rise during *chiburi.* Complete the *kata* with *nōtō,* rise, and return to your starting point.

The *bunkai* of *Ushiro* is defense against a single opponent who attacks from your rear while you are seated in a formal setting.

Figures 13B-1 through 13B-10 Seitei Iai Kata: Ushiro

Figures 13B-11 through 13B-26 Seitei Iai Kata: Ushiro

Figures 13C-1 through 13C-20 Seitei Iai Kata: Ukenagashi

13C: UKENAGASHI

The principle technique practiced in *Ukenagashi*—the "Flowing Block" from which it takes its name—is common to *waza* from several styles, including *Musō Shinden-Ryū, Hōki-Ryū,* and *Eishin-Ryū.* It is perhaps for this reason that there are more numerous differences between the *Seitei* and *Shoden* versions.

The *Seitei* variation of *Ukenagashi* begins in *seiza,* facing 90 degrees to the right, rather than 45 degrees, as in our *shoden* version. As you finish *kokyū,* look to your left, then perform *koiguchi no kirikata.* Begin to rise for *nukitsuke,* stepping forward with your left foot as you draw about one-third to one-half of the sword (Figure 13C-2). Rise to a standing position (with *iaigoshi*) as you complete *nukitsuke,* drawing the sword overhead as you turn your body about 45 degrees to your left, with the *kissaki* angled downward to your left as shown in Figure 13C-4. In a continuously flowing movement, twist your body another 90 degrees to your left as you grasp the *tsuka* with your left hand and perform *furikaburi,* then perform *kirioroshi* at a 45-degree angle down and to your left, gaining momentum by stepping back with your left foot into a wide, low stance (similar to a side stance), so that your direction has now turned 135 degrees from your original *seiza* orientation (Figure 13C-7). With *zanshin,* maintain this stance as you tilt the sword down and to the right at about a 45-degree angle until the *mine* rests against the top of your right thigh just above the knee as shown in Figure 13C-9. Hold this "drip" chiburi steady while reversing the grip of your right hand on the *tsuka.* Release your left hand, still holding the sword in place with your right hand, and grasp the *saya* at the *koiguchi.* Swing the sword in a wide arc to your left side and place it edge-up on top of your left forearm to begin *nōtō.* Lower to one knee as you complete *nō tō,* then rise and return to your starting position.

Bunkai for *Ukenagashi* is essentially the same as for the *Shoden* version. Your attacker's sword is already drawn and ready, so there is no chance to beat him to the draw. Instead, by appearing vulnerable to attack as you begin to draw, you lure the opponent into a premature attack, then rise with the "Flowing Block" for which the technique is named. By stepping to the side and allowing the opponent's strike to slide obliquely down your

Figures 13C-21

Figures 13D-1 through 13D-20 Seitei Iai Kata: Tsuka-ate

angled sword, his balance is momentarily lost, allowing you to finish him with the *kirioroshi* into which the block flows.

13D: TSUKA-ATE

Tsuka-ate (Handle-Strike) is a derivation of a *tatehiza waza* from *Eishin-Ryū* (not *Musō Jikiden Eishin-Ryū*), but it has several similarities to our *Chū den Waza*. *Tsuka-ate* is the only *Seitei Kata* performed from the *tatehiza* posture. It gets its name from the first defensive technique, which occurs even before *nukitsuke*.

In *Tsuka-ate*, you begin facing straight ahead in *tatehiza* (see Figure 13D-1). As you inhale the third cleansing breath, grasp the *tsuka* with both hands, rise to one knee as you step forward with your right foot, circle the *tsuka* clockwise and strike at face level with the *tsukagashira*, as shown in Figure 14D-5.

Perform *koiguchi no kirikata*, then *nukitsuke* by drawing the *saya* back with your left hand, turning your shoulder to the left to draw the *kissaki* from the *koiguchi*, and—with a slight scoot to the rear—thrust one-handed past your left shoulder behind you (see Figure 13D-8).

Use the turn of your upper body to draw your *katana* slightly forward and raise it to *furikaburi*, grasping the *tsuka* now with both hands, then shuffle-step forward with *kirioroshi*, with your right foot forward. Follow *kirioroshi* with *Eishin-Ryū* (Flicking) *chiburi* and *nōtō*, sliding your right foot back and circling it beneath yourself as you resheathe the sword. Rise to standing position, maintaining *iaigoshi*, then step back to your starting point, and return your hands to your sides.

Figures 13D-21 through 13D-24 Seitei Iai Kata: Tsuka-ate

13E: TSUKA-ATE

Side View

Details of *Tsuka-ate,* particularly how the hip-turn is used to complete the draw, and the positioning of the forearm during the rearward thrust, are better viewed in side view below.

The *bunkai* for *Tsuka-ate* should be somewhat familiar. You have opponents at both your front and rear. The one in front attempts to grab your *tsuka* in order to render you defenseless against the enemy attacking from behind. However, with the clockwise movement of the *tsuka,* you either evade the opponent's grasp or wrench the *tsuka* free, and pummel him in the face. With the sword in striking position, you need only pull the *saya* back and it is instantly drawn, allowing you to pierce the attacker behind you without delay. Then, before the enemy in front of you can recover from the stunning blow to his face, you finish him with *kirioroshi.*

Figures 13E-1 through 13E-10 Seitei Iai Kata: Tsuka-ate (Side View)

Figures 13E-11 through 13E-22 Seitei Iai Kata: Tsuka-ate (Side View)

13F: KESAGIRI

Kesagiri (Diagonal Cut) is a derivative of a similar technique found in *Hōki-Ryū*. It is the first of the *Seitei tachiwaza,* or standing techniques. A *kesa* is the traditional robe of a Japanese monk, which covers only the left shoulder and arm. The lapel of the left shoulder runs diagonally across the chest and beneath the left armpit. *Kesagiri* takes its name from the fact that the

angle of its finishing cut follows the line of a *kesa*'s lapel—cutting from the left shoulder to the right hip.

As you finish inhaling the third time, take your first step forward with your right foot. During your second step (left foot) raise your hands to the *tsuka* and perform *koiguchi no kirikata*. As you begin your third step, twist the *tsuka* and *saya* almost a half-turn counterclockwise (Figure 13F-4) as you prepare to draw.

Nukitsuke swings up and to your right at about a 45 degree angle, finishing with the *kissaki* pointing out and away from your body at about 45 degrees, as depicted in Figure 13F-6. Twist your right wrist 180 degrees clockwise to reverse the direction of its cutting edge, then bend your right wrist performing a modified *furikaburi* over your right shoulder as you take a shuffle-step (right foot, then left foot) forward, grasp the *tsuka* with your left hand and perform a diagonal cut angled down and to your left at about a 45-degree angle, ending in the position shown in Figure 13F-10.

Step back with your right foot and raise the sword to *hassō no kamae*. Step back with your left foot as you swing the sword past your head, slightly to the left side, and perform *Eishin-Ryū chiburi*.

After *nōtō*, draw you left foot forward to meet your right foot (maintaining *iaigoshi*), then step back to your starting position.

Bunkai for *Kesagiri* involves a confrontation with a single opponent, whose sword is already drawn. As the opponent attacks with *kirioroshi*, your rising *nukitsuke* slashes one or both of his arms as they reach full extension. Your *kesagiri* is then used to finish him. By stepping back into *hassō no kamae*, you are on guard in case he is not quite finished or has accomplices

Figures 13F-1 through 13F-5 Seitei Iai Kata: Kesagiri

Figures 13F-6 through 13F-23 Seitei Iai Kata: Kesagiri

nearby. If your opponent is still struggling for life, your tall, overwhelming posture and *zanshin* will serve to crush his resolve and break his spirit, thereby helping him expire and lessening his suffering.

13G: MOROTEZUKI

Morotezuki (Two-Handed Thrust) is based upon a common *kendō* technique, but its key principles can also be found in various *iaidō* styles, although normally practiced in a different manner.

As you complete *kokyū,* take your first step forward with your right foot. During your second step (left foot) perform *koiguchi no kirikata.* On your third step twist the *tsuka* and *saya* 45 degrees counterclockwise and perform *nukitsuke* as an angular cut at temple-height (Figure 13G-7).

Pull the *tsuka* back toward your navel and grip it with your left hand, then take a small shuffle-step forward and make a two-handed thrust to the solar plexus. Simultaneously pull the sword free and turn, pivoting on the balls of both feet without changing their relative positions, *furikaburi* as a natural byproduct. Step forward with your right foot and perform *kirioroshi* to the rear opponent. Again pivot on the balls of both feet while raising the sword in *furikaburi.* Step forward with your right foot and perform *kirioroshi* to the front opponent. While maintaining *zanshin,* use *Eishin-Ryū chiburi,* followed by *nōtō,* then step back to your original starting position. Much of the coordination of footwork with the techniques is better viewed from the side.

Figures 13G-1 through 13G-20 Seitei Iai Kata: Morotezuki

Figures 13G-21 through 13G-29 Seitei Iai Kata: Morotezuki

13H: MOROTEZUKI

Side View

Morotezuki is normally considered to be a defense against three attackers; two to your front (one behind the other) and one to your rear. *Nuki-tsuke* and *morotezuki* are used to first disable, then finish the first opponent in front of you, before turning and finishing the opponent to your rear with *kirioroshi,* then returning to the second frontal attacker with another *kirioroshi.*

Figures 13H-1 through 13H-15 Seitei Iai Kata: Morotezuki (Side View)

Figures 13H-16 through 13H-32 Seitei Iai Kata: Morotezuki (Side View)

13I: SANPŌGIRI

Sanpōgiri (Three-Way Cut) is found in various formats in numerous styles of *iaidō*. It is also a defense against three attackers, in this instance coming at you from the front and each side.

At the completion of *kokyū*, take your first step forward with your right foot. During your second step (left foot) perform *koiguchi no kirikata*, then your third step is 90 degrees to your right, using *nukitsuke* as a downward cut to the top of the head, stopping with the blade angled upward at about a 45-degree angle (Figure 13I-8). Without changing the position of your feet, pivot 180 degrees to your left on the balls of both feet while raising the sword in *furikaburi*, completing your turn with *kirioroshi* to your left side. Turn 90 degrees to your right, raising the sword in *furikaburi*, then step forward with your right foot and perform *kirioroshi*. Step back with your right foot into *jōdan no kamae*. After a moderate pause, step back with your left foot as you swing the sword slightly to the left side of your head and perform *Eishin-Ryū chiburi*, then *nōtō*.

Bunkai for *Sanpōgiri* is fairly straightforward: *nukitsuke* is used to dispatch the opponent to your most vulnerable side (right), turning almost instantly with *kirioroshi* to the opponent on your left. The opponent to your front is kept in view at all times, until you turn and finish him with *kirioroshi*, as well.

Figures 13I-1 through 13I-20 Seitei Iai Kata: Sanpōgiri

Figures 13J-1 through 13J-20 Seitei Iai Kata: Ganmen-ate

13J: GANMEN-ATE

Ganmen-ate (Face Strike) is based upon techniques used in the *Musō Jiki-den Eishin-Ryū Waza, Yukichigai* and *Moniri.*

As you finish inhaling the third *kokyū* breath, take your first step forward with your right foot. During your second step (left foot) perform *koiguchi no kirikata.* As you take your third step (right foot), thrust the *tsuka* and *saya* forward to face height, striking with the *tsuka-gashira,* as shown in Figure 13J-6. Pull the *saya* back with your left hand, then pivot on the balls of both feet, using the rotation of your hips to complete *nukitsuke,* holding the sword at waist level with your right hand, as illustrated in Figure 13J-9. Step forward with your right foot and make a one-handed thrust to the solar plexus, using the underside of your right forearm to reinforce the *tsuka* to steady the blade. Note that the blade is turned flat, so its edge is facing outward, as shown in Figure 13K-11 in side view.

Pull the *tsuka* back toward your navel with your right hand to withdraw it, turning your hand one-quarter turn clockwise, so the *mine* is upward. Then pivot on the balls of both feet, and continue the motion of your hand, raising the sword into *furikaburi* as you grip it with your left hand, then step forward with your right foot, finishing with *kirioroshi.* Maintain *zanshin* during *Eishin-Ryū chiburi* and *nōtō,* then draw your left foot even with your right foot and step back to your starting position before dropping your hands to your sides.

Figures 13J-21 through 13J-23 Seitei Iai Kata: Ganmen-ate

13K: GANMEN-ATE

Side View

Bunkai for *ganmen-ate* is usually shown against two opponents: one each at your front and rear. Since both are attacking simultaneously, you must use the *ganmen-ate* strike to the face to temporarily disable the enemy in front of you in order to have time to turn and impale the foe behind you. Before the first opponent can recover from the blow to his face, you must turn again and finish him with *kirioroshi*.

Figures 13K-1 through 13K-12 Seitei Iai Kata: Ganmen-ate (Side View)

Figures 13K-13 through 13K-26 Seitei Iai Kata: Ganmen-ate (Side View)

Figures 13L-1 through 13L-20 Seitei Iai Kata: Soetezuki

13L: SOETEZUKI

Soetezuki (Reinforced Thrust) is derived from one of the best known techniques found in *Hōki-Ryū,* containing precise and difficult footwork and movement.

As you finish inhaling the third time, take your first step forward with your right foot. During your second step (left foot) perform *koiguchi no kirikata.* As you begin your third step, twist your right foot inward as you turn to face 90 degrees to your left, as shown in Figure 13L-4. Twist your body to the left as you begin *nukitsuke* (Figure 13L-5). Step back with your left foot into a side stance as you complete *nukitsuke* as a downward arcing cut at about a 45-degree angle, as illustrated in Figure 13L-6. Pull the *tsuka* back to your right hip, allowing your right foot to slide back about a half-step as you turn your body to the right, and align your left hand along the *mine,* with your thumb on top and finger parallel to the blade, as depicted in Figure 13L-7.

Step forward with your left foot and make a reinforced thrust, guiding the travel of the blade with your left hand, letting the *mine* slide along the groove between your thumb and forefinger (see Figure 13L-8). Without moving your feet, raise and extend your right arm, pinching the *mine* between the thumb and index finger of your left hand as you tilt the blade at a 45-degree angle down to your left (Figure 13L-10). Step back with your left foot as you flick the blade forward into an *Eishin-Ryū chiburi,* and follow this with *nōtō.* Bring your left foot even with your right foot, turn 90 degrees to your right, then step back to your starting position.

Figures 13L-21 through 13L-22 Seitei Iai Kata: Soetezuki

Figures 13M-1 through 13M-20 Seitei Iai Kata: Soetezuki (Side View)

13M: SOETEZUKI

Side View

Figure 13M-21

Soetezuki (opposite) is normally practiced as a defense against a single opponent attacking from your left as you are walking. You turn and step back, cutting to the enemy's temple or neck, then thrust through the solar plexus to finish him. An alternative *bunkai* is against two opponents, both attacking from the side. *Nukitsuke* is then used to cut the first opponent's neck, and the reinforced thrust from which *Soetezuki* gets its name finishes his accomplice.

13N: SHIHŌGIRI

Shihōgiri (Four-Way Cut) is a *tachiwaza* (standing) version of similar *Suwariwaza* (half-kneeling) techniques common to both *Muso Jikiden Eishin-Ryū* and *Hōki-Ryū*. Unlike its *Eishin-Ryū Suwariwaza* counterpart, the *bunkai* for *Seitei Shihōgiri* is identical to the way it is practiced.

In *Shihōgiri,* you are surrounded by four attackers—one to each corner.

As you complete your third cleansing breath, take your first step forward with your right foot. During your second step (left foot) perform *koiguchi no kirikata.* Turn 45 degrees to your right on the third step. Twist the *tsuka* and *saya* 45 degrees counterclockwise as you strike downward with the side of the *tsuka,* as shown in Figure 13N-5. This strike to the wrist of the opponent to your front-right breaks his grip on his *tsuka,* giving you time to pull the *saya* back with your left hand and, with a shuffle-step to your left-rear, perform a thrust to the rear past your left shoulder. The *tsuka* is braced against the underside of your right forearm. Raise the sword and grasp the *tsuka* with your left hand in *furikaburi* as you face back toward your right-front. Step forward with your left foot and use *kirioroshi* to finish the opponent whose wrist you first struck. Turn 90 degrees to your right during *furikaburi* and step forward with your right foot as you employ *kirioroshi* against the opponent to your right-rear. Pivot on the balls of both feet 180 degrees to your left, preparing your hands for *furikaburi,* and step forward while performing *furikaburi* and land right foot forward with *kirioroshi* to the remaining attacker. Step back with your

right foot raising your sword to *jōdan no kamae.* Use the menace of your posture and the strength of your *zanshin* to suppress any remaining spirit in your opponents. Then, step back with your left foot as you swing the sword just to the left of your head into *Eishin-Ryū chiburi,* followed by *nōtō.* Slide your left foot even with your right foot, turn 45 degrees to your right while still in *iaigoshi,* and step back to your starting point.

Figures 13N-1 through 13N-15 Seitei Iai Kata: Shihōgiri

Figures 13N-16 through 13N-34 Seitei Iai Kata: Shihōgiri

Figures 130-1 through 130-20 Seitei Iai Kata: Sōgiri

130: SŌGIRI

Sōgiri (Many Cuts) is patterned after the *Musō Jikiden Eishin-Ryū Waza, Sō makuri.*

At the third cleansing breath, step forward with the right foot. Perform *koiguchi no kirikata* on the second step and begin *nukitsuke* on the third step, but push back with the right foot as *nukitsuke* is nearing completion and perform *furikaburi.* Notice in Figures 13O-5 and 13P-5 that the blade leaves the scabbard at an angle toward the left-rear, serving to protect the head in a manner similar to *ukenagashi* during *furikaburi.* Step forward with the right foot into *yokomen-uchi* to the left side of the opponent's head, cutting from the temple to the jaw-line. Perform *furikaburi,* then shuffle forward with *yokomen-uchi* to the neck on the opposite side, as in *Sō makuri.* Notice, however, that the right foot remains slightly forward, unlike the footwork of *Sōmakuri.* Again perform *furikaburi,* and move forward with a diagonal cut to the ribs on the opposite side, using the same footwork. Now raise the blade in a motion similar to *furikaburi,* but pass it

Figures 130-21 through 130-29 Seitei Iai Kata: Sōgiri

overhead and lower it to the left side of the body (Figures 13O-14 And 13P-17), then lunge forward with *yoko-ichi-mon-ji,* cutting laterally across the midsection, flowing immediately into *furikaburi* and shuffling-forward with *kirioroshi.* Conclude with *Eishin-Ryū chiburi* and nōtō, then return to your starting point.

Bunkai for *Sōgiri* is essentially the same as for *Sōmakuri:* an onslaught by multiple attackers from the front.

13P: SŌGIRI

Side View

In the side view below, the footwork and angles of attack for the five cuts of *Sōgiri* are clearly depicted.

Figures 13P-1 through 13P-9 Seitei Iai Kata: Sōgiri (Side View)

Figures 13P-10 through 13P-24 Seitei Iai Kata: Sōgiri (Side View)

Figures 13P-25 through 13P-33 Seitei Iai Kata: Sōgiri (Side View)

13Q: NUKIUCHI

Nukiuchi is a *tachiwaza* version of the *Musō Jikiden Eishin-Ryū Waza* by the same name.

Holding the third breath of *kokyū*, perform *nukitsuke* vertically, directly into *furikaburi* while rising on the knees, then drop into *kirioroshi*. Complete the *kata* with *Eishin-Ryū chiburi* and *nōtō*, returing to the starting point afterward.

Figures 13Q-1 through 13Q-19 Seitei Iai Kata: Nukiuchi

13R: NUKIUCHI

Side View

The footwork for this version of *Nukiuchi* is more readily apparent in the side-view presentation below:

The *bunkai* for this version of *nukiuchi* could either be as a *jōiuchi* situation in which you are either attempting to arrest or ordered to execute an enemy or as a defense against an opponent who begins to attack and is simply outdrawn by the speed of your *nukiuchi*.

Figures 13R-1 through 13R-9 Seitei Iai Kata: Nukiuchi (Side View)

Figures 13R-10 through 13R-17 Seitei Iai Kata: Nukiuchi (Side View)

試し斬り

Chapter 14

Tameshigiri

Practice Cutting

Iaijutsu training has three major components: *waza* (techniques), *tachiuchi no kurai* (partner exercises), and *tameshigiri* (practice cutting). Together these elements provide a balanced training program for the physical skills of *iaijutsu* in much the same way that *kata* (forms), *kumite* (sparring), and *tameshiwari* (breaking) promote well-rounded training in *karate-dō*.

The *waza* practice in *iaijutsu* develops the knowledge of appropriate techniques for the various types of attacks a *samurai* might encounter. It also trains the practitioner to block and cut with correct stance, balance, mental focus, and technique.

However, *waza* practice must be augmented with partner exercises, such as the *tachiuchi no kurai,* in order for the student to develop proper timing, distance, and footwork in their practical application.

Tameshigiri, which is also frequently called *suemono-giri* (cutting stationary objects) is essentially a means of determining if the student can apply the lessons learned in *waza* and *katachi* practice to the use of a "live" sword (*shinken*). In order to cut the practice material, you must apply correct swinging technique, together with proper cutting distance (*kirima*). If these elements are combined correctly, a clean test cut is the result. If not, the areas requiring further practice become readily apparent.

Occasionally, *tameshigiri* is depicted as a practice in which only masters engage, requiring near superhuman ability and training to execute correctly. While *tameshigiri* is not particularly easy, it is also nothing mysterious or inordinately difficult with properly balanced training in *waza* and *katachi*.

The purpose of a *katana,* after all, is to cut! The curvature and balance of the blade are specifically designed to cause it to slice when the sword is swung correctly. Proper repeated practice of *waza* will develop the correct cutting stroke, and consistent training in *tachiuchi no kurai* will develop the proper footwork, balance, and cutting distance. The major elements on which to focus for a proper cutting stroke are *te no uchi* (grip), *hasuji o tōsu* (straight alignment of cutting edge), and *enshin ryoku* (centripetal force). The key components of balance and distance are a stable stance, strong hip rotation at the finish, and making contact with the *monouchi.*

Figure 14A-1

The *monouchi* is a portion of the blade, about ten inches in length, which begins approximately six inches from the *kissaki,* as shown in Figure 14A-1. This section of the blade provides the best possible combination of tensile strength and curvature for the cut. The cutting portion of the blade must be beyond its center in order to obtain the natural slicing action for which its curvature was designed, but if impact occurs too close to the *kissaki* you risk either breaking the blade or not getting a deep enough cut.

Figure 14A-2 Kesagiri (diagonal cut)

For cutting, correct technique is of course far more important than muscle strength. If you have solid *kihon,* you should not have difficulty cutting when the time comes. In fact, women and children can often perform *tameshigiri* earlier in their training than many men, because rather than trying to strike forcefully they tend to use less muscular force and let the sword do what it was designed to do. So a key fact to remember is:

The **sword** cuts, not you!

Once you have developed the proper swing, *tameshigiri* is merely a matter of correctly applying that swing to the target. The following illustrations diagram the major technical elements involved in cutting. These illustrations are based on the most basic cutting technique, *kesagiri,* the downward

diagonal cut which follows the line of a monk's *kesa* (single-sleeved robe).

Generally, a *kesagiri* cut will be made along the line shown in Figure 14A-2 on page 296.

Seen from a top view, the path of the sword through the material should generally look like the illustrations in Figures 14A-3 through 14A-5.

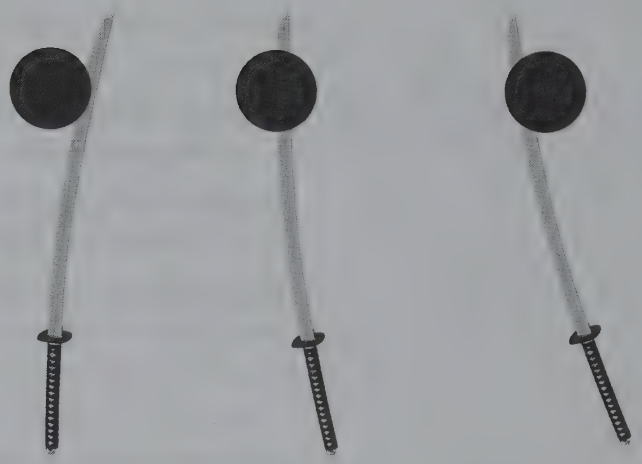


Figure 14A-3 through 14A-5
Path of sword to correctly slice through material

As shown in this series of three illustrations, the natural swing of the blade, combined with its curvature and the natural rotation of the hips at the completion of the swing, will cause the blade to slice cleanly and almost effortlessly through the target.

In contrast, a "baseball" swing—in which the arms and wrists do not reach full extension until at or just after impact with the target—will result in a clubbing action, as illustrated in Figure 14A-6 below. A striking or hacking motion invariably causes the blade to wedge into the target like an ax. Such a cut is seldom completed, no matter how powerful the swing, and never leaves a clean, straight cut.

Although such a blow would certainly be fatal, it would be unthinkable for a *samurai* to hack an opponent to death in such a crude and ignominious manner. To act with respect for one's adversary by preserving his dignity in a swift and honorable death requires that the cut be clean and complete in a single stroke.

The most common materials for *tameshigiri* are tightly rolled *tatami-omote* (the outer covering, like a straw beach-mat, of a *tatami*) or a piece of bamboo from two to six inches in diameter. To prepare *tatami-omote* for cutting, immerse and soak it in water until it is thoroughly saturated. This requires a minimum of twelve hours (overnight), and preferably a full day or two. Once thoroughly saturated, the *tatami-omote* closely approximates the consistency of human tissue. Tightly roll the saturated mats around a wooden dowel about 3/4-inch diameter (PVC pipe is sometimes used, but is discouraged) inserted no more than one-third the length of the mat, and place it on a stand. A wooden stand made from a length of 4-by-4 or 6-by-6 lumber, like that shown in Figure 14A-2, is preferable (and more

Figure 14A-6 Incorrect path wedges sword in material

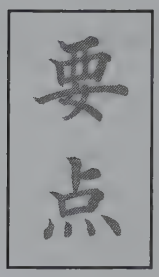
aesthetic) when using a wooden dowel. Stands made from pipe are common for PVC. To begin with, we suggest that you cut single mats. As your technique improves, you will later cut two or three tatami rolled together.

Cutting watermelons and similar rinded fruits requires almost no skill whatsoever, and such demonstrations are normally made by those without real training in *samurai* swordsmanship to impress spectators who have little, if any, martial arts knowledge. Cutting apples, potatoes, etc. tossed in the air does not require cutting skill per se, but can occasionally be useful for training in accuracy and eye-hand coordination.

We want to caution overly zealous students against turning your skills into some sort of carnival sideshow. If you are a true student of *iaijutsu,* you will have too much self-respect to waste your skills on flashy tricks for the sake of attracting a crowd of ignorant, but cheering, spectators.

Furthermore, there is little to be gained by attempting *tameshigiri* too early in your training. *Tameshigiri* should not be viewed as some form of showmanship, nor even as a test of your skill, but rather as a means of measuring or confirming your progress in developing a correct and natural swing. We seldom encourage students to attempt *tameshigiri* until they have trained for several months, by which time they have first performed thousands of *kirioroshi* through thin air to refine their cutting stroke.

A final word of caution is that *tameshigiri* involves swinging a live sword powerfully and with potentially lethal effect. We therefore strongly urge the reader never to attempt *tameshigiri* except under the supervision of a qualified instructor.



Chapter 15

Eishin-Ryū no Yōten

Summary of the Eishin-Ryū System

The preceding chapters have detailed the forty-four *waza* and ten *katachi* of *Musō Jikiden Eishin-Ryū Iaijutsu,* together with the twelve *Zen Nippon Kendō Renmei Seitei Iai Kata,* totalling sixty-six training drills.

To help you picture the entire *Eishin-Ryū* system and better understand the progression from *Shoden* to *Chūden* to *Okuden,* we have prepared a chart listing all of the techniques in each level.

When instructing students in Western countries, we normally teach the *Seitei Kata* and *Tachiuchi no Kurai* first. This allows them to learn a variety of techniques early in their training and immediately begin practicing distance and footwork with a partner. While Japanese students are already accustomed to the *seiza* posture, and can spend long periods training exclusively in the *Shoden Waza,* most Westerners find that practicing the *Seitei Kata* first helps them gradually become comfortable sitting in *seiza* position and later progress to *tatehiza* with reduced discomfort. For those students desiring to enter tournament competition (see Chapter 17), the *Seitei Kata* provide both variety of technique and relatively uniform recognition by tournament judges.

EISHIN-RYŪ- IAIJUTSU WAZA

Shoden Ōmori-Ryū Seiza Waza *(Shoden Waza or Seiza Waza)*

1. *Mae*
2. *Migi*
3. *Hidari*
4. *Ushiro*
5. *Yaegaki*
   a. *Omote*
   b. *Ura*
6. *Ukenagashi*
7. *Kaishaku*
8. *Tsukekomi*
9. *Tsukikage*
10. *Oikaze*
11. *Nukiuchi*

Chūden Tatehiza Waza *(Tatehiza Waza)*

1. *Yokogumo*
2. *Tora no Issoku*
3. *Inazuma*
4. *Ukigumo*
5. *Yamaoroshi*
6. *Iwanami*
7. *Urokogaeshi*
8. *Namigaeshi*
9. *Takiotoshi*
10. *Makkō*

Okuden Tachi Waza *(Tachiwaza)*

1. *Yukizure*
2. *Tsuredachi*
3. *Sōmakuri*
4. *Sōdome*
5. *Shinobu*
6. *Yukichigai*
7. *Sode Surigaeshi*
8. *Moniri*
9. *Kabezoe*
10. *Ukenagashi*

Okuden Itomagoi Waza *(Itomagoi Waza)*

1. *Itomagoi Ichi*
2. *Itomagoi Ni*
3. *Itomagoi San*

Okuden Suwari Waza *(Suwariwaza)*

1. *Kasumi*
2. *Sunegakoi*
3. *Shihōgiri*
4. *Tozume*
5. *Towaki*
6. *Tanashita*
7. *Ryōzume*
8. *Torabashiri*

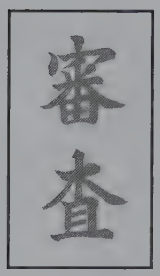
Tachiuchi no Kurai *(Katachi)*

1. *Deai*
2. *Tsukekomi*
3. *Ukenagashi*
4. *Ukekomi*
5. *Tsukikage*
6. *Suigetsutō*
7. *Zetsumyōken*
8. *Dokumyōken*
9. *Shinmyōken*
10. *Uchikomi*

Zen Nippon Kendō Renmei Seitei Iai Kata* *(Seitei Kata)*

1. *Seiza Mae*
2. *Seiza Ushiro*
3. *Ukenagashi*
4. *Tsuka-ate*
5. *Kesagiri*
6. *Morotezuki*
7. *Sampōgiri*
8. *Ganmen-ate*
9. *Soetezuki*
10. *Shihōgiri*
11. *Sōgiri*
12. *Nukiuchi*

*NOTE: In the strictest sense, the *Seitei Kata* are not actually part of the *Eishin-Ryū* system, but are included here because they are widely practiced throughout the world, recognized in most competitive and demonstration settings, and often taught in *Eishin-Ryū dōjō*.



Chapter 16

Shinsa ni Tsuite

Promotion Guidelines

Musō Jikiden Eishin-Ryū Iaijutsu awards *kyū* and *dan* ranking in a similar manner to most popular martial arts. A key difference is that in *iaijutsu* these ranks are not designated by colored belts, as is common in *karate-dō, jūdō,* and many other martial arts.

In addition to the *dan* (Black Belt) and *kyū* (below Black Belt) rankings, *Eishin-Ryū* also recognizes three highly coveted titles: *Renshi, Kyōshi,* and *Hanshi.* The meaning of these titles is very difficult to adequately translate into English. Literally, they translate roughly as: Training Warrior, Warrior Instructor, and Exemplary Warrior, respectively. However, to convey the nuance of these titles, the terms Master (*Renshi*), Advanced Master (*Kyōshi*), and Grandmaster (*Hanshi*) convey the degree of status and respect accorded to those to whom they have been bestowed. These titles are typically awarded by the governing organization of the style, such as the *Nippon Kobudō Jikishin-Kai* or the *Dai Nippon Butoku-Kai,* in recognition of outstanding martial arts achievement and service to that organization.

The honorary titles of *Sensei* (teacher) and *Shihan* (master) are generally used as a matter of respect and are not typically bestowed by an organization. Instead, those *yūdansha* (Black Belts) who give instruction are usually referred to as *Sensei,* and *yūdansha* who are high ranking, have been teaching for a long time, or are deserving of special recognition are referred to as *Shihan.* In a smaller *dōjō* with only one instructor, he or she would usually be called *Sensei,* unless they are particularly high ranking or widely regarded. In a larger *dōjō,* several instructors might be *Sensei,* while the chief instructor would probably be called *Shihan.*

Each governing organization, such as the *Nippon Kobudō Jikishin-Kai* International, has specific requirements to be met for each successive promotion. In addition to specified elements to be performed (*waza* and *katachi*), there may be certain aspects of historical, technical, and philosophical knowledge (*gakka*) which must be demonstrated, as well as the instructor's ongoing evaluation of the student's respect and spirit during training.

Since these requirements vary according to the governing organization, they are not detailed here. However, when observing the student's performance of *waza* and *katachi,* promotion examiners typically evaluate the student's *kihon* (fundamentals) by the following criteria:

1. *Nukitsuke*
   Koiguchi no kirikata, nukidashi (draw), *saya hiki* (pulling the *saya*), footwork precision, and angle of blade, posture, and spirit.
2. *Furikaburi*
   Level movement of blade, position of *tsuba,* exposure of arm, and coordination of hands with sword.
3. *Kirioroshi*
   Hasuji o tōsu (straightness of cut), height of *kissaki* at finish, footwork, *tsuba* position, *tsuka no nigiri kata, enshin ryoku,* and spirit.
4. *Chiburi*
   Position of sword hand, angle of blade, timing of *chiburi* to footwork, and *iaigoshi.*
5. *Nōtō*
   Hand position at *koiguchi,* speed and timing, coordination of *nōtō* with footwork, and *zanshin.*

The examiners will usually also make a general assessment of the student's *jitsugi,* his overall presentation and demeanor, looking for the following key elements:

1. *Kibikibi to shita dōsa:* Sharp, precise, spirited movement.
2. *Reigi Tadashiku:* Sincerity of respect showing from within.
3. *Katana no atsukai kata:* Method of handling the sword, showing familiarity, respect, and technical correctness.

Prior to advancement to their first *kyū* rank (usually *Rokkyū,* 6th *Kyū*), students are generally referred to as *shoshinsha* (beginners). While the first promotion is usually to the rank of *Rokkyū,* it is not uncommon for lower ranks, such as *Kyūkyū* (9th *kyū*), to be used by some *dōjō,* either to provide a more rapid sense of advancement for beginners or to give a more frequent sense of achievement for children.

After promotion to *Shodan* (1st *dan*), practitioners must show increasing knowledge of the *Eishin-Ryū* system and continuing refinement of technique. With higher ranks, examiners increasingly look for evidence of the *Dai-Kyō-Soku-Kei* progression (see Chapter 5) and exhibition of personality in the techniques performed during testing. They also place increasing emphasis on genuine, sincere respect and *heijōshin* being evident in a practitioner's performance as he rises in *dan* rank. Another key factor examiners look for in *yūdansha* is *fūkaku* (depth or strength) in such areas as *chakugan, kokyū, maai, kihaku,* and *zanshin.* Each of these elements most show the advanced student's deeper insight and application.

As a student progresses through stages of *Shu-Ha-Ri,* his technique passes through equivalent stages called *Waza-Jutsu-Ryaku,* and the promotion examiners will be watching for these progressive levels of expertise.

Waza is the most basic level of technique. The term *waza* refers to "technique" in almost a mechanical sense. It is purely the method of performance, devoid of personality and predominantly physical in nature.

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Jutsu is a higher level of technical expertise—a level at which skill begins to transform into art. At the *Ha* stage of development, the practitioner should now be exhibiting a degree of finesse in his performance. Techniques performed at this level should exhibit a blend of both the physical and mental aspects of the art.

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Ryaku is the highest level of technique. Here, the refinement of physical ability, mental prowess, and the infusion of the personality of a master at the *Ri* stage of development elevates every technique performed from "art" to "masterpiece." *Ryaku* can be literally translated as "abridgement" or "synopsis." These are apt terms for a stage at which all of the princi-

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ples of the art are embodied into even the simplest individual technique performed by a master of this caliber.

In addition to the improved skills and attitude needed for promotion after *Shodan,* most governing bodies prescribe minimum age and training time requirements for each subsequent advancement. Training times that are fairly typical in *iaijutsu* are shown in the table below:

Dan Promotion Timing Guidelines

Rank Sought	Minimum Training Time	Age	Cumulative
Shodan (1st *dan*)	Six months at *Shodan-ho*	13	1 1/2 years
Nidan (2nd *dan*)	One year at *Shodan*	16	2 1/2 years
Sandan (3rd *dan*)	Two years at *Nidan*	18	4 1/2 years
Yondan (4th *dan*)	Three years at *Sandan*	18	7 1/2 years
Godan (5th *dan*)	Four years at *Yondan*	18	11 1/2 years
Rokudan (6th dan)	Five years at *Godan*	18	16 1/2 years

It may seem odd that the minimum age for *Yondan, Godan,* and *Rokudan* remains eighteen, rather than rising to twenty-one, twenty-five, and thirty, respectively. However, there are cases in which a young student has reached *Shodan-Ho* at the age of eight or nine and subsequently risen no higher than *Nidan* due to his or her age. Upon reaching adulthood, such a student would be promoted to the rank, hypothetically as high as *Godan,* warranted by his or her skill, knowledge, and years of training.

Similar minimum age and training times normally apply to the titles which may be bestowed upon deserving *kōdansha:*

Title	Minimum Training Time	Minimum Age
Renshi	Four years after *Godan*	30
Kyōshi	Seven years after *Renshi*	37
Hanshi	Twenty years after *Kyōshi*	57

While it is beneficial to students to have a means of measuring their progress and to feel a sense of accomplishment at their promotion to

higher ranks, we should point out that there is also a danger inherent in the ranking system.

Occasionally, students become overly focused on advancing from rank to rank. Worse yet, some become fixated on outranking students they perceive as rivals in their quest for higher rank. For these students, rank becomes the objective of their training rather than perfection of their character and improvement of their skills.

While high rank does carry with it a certain degree of status, it is critically important to understand and accept the ranking system for what it is: a tool, a simple means to measure your progress toward your goal.

We do not want to minimize the importance of rank, nor to discourage anyone from seeking advancement. However, the knowledge, skill, and improved lifestyle should be the goals of your training, not merely your rank. Rank is best viewed simply as one barometer of the progress you are making toward your real goal of a victorious life.

Chapter 17

Taikai ni Tsuite

Tournament Participation

Until late in the twentieth century, there were few tournaments outside Japan featuring *iaidō*. As *iaidō* has steadily grown in popularity outside Japan, *iaidō* tournaments have become increasingly common. In addition, *iaidō* is becoming an increasing common category in *kobudō* events and other martial arts tournaments.

One of the first organizations in the U.S. to incorporate *iaidō* into its martial arts tournaments was the Amateur Athletic Union of the United States (AAU). To ensure uniform standards and objectivity, the AAU established judging criteria for *iaidō* competition. The AAU requested Shimabukuro *Hanshi* to establish those criteria, which became the basis for many other *iaidō* tournament judging systems. However, since *iaidō* competitions have become more commonplace, and the specific rules and judging criteria are subject to periodic change, this chapter will deal only in generalities and principles that can be applied to judging *iaidō* irrespective of the specific rules or scoring criteria.

Tournament competition offers a number of potential training benefits to the *iaijutsu* practitioner. Four hundred years ago, a *samurai*'s motivation to train diligently and intently was quite clear: there might be a battle the next day in which his life would be at stake. We no longer benefit from such a powerful incentive to practice. But an upcoming tournament offers an incentive with several parallels to a battle.

Likewise, life-or-death combat demonstrated with finality whether a *samurai* was able to apply the lessons learned in the *dōjō* while under intense pressure. Without risking life or serious injury, tournaments now give *iaidō* practitioners the opportunity to test their skills, and their *heijōshin*,

under the pressures of competition. This provides some realistic and helpful feedback on an *iaidōka*'s training progress without putting his or her life at stake.

For these reasons, we encourage students of *iaijutsu* to regularly participate in the *iaidō* competitions that are well-supervised and judged. Tournaments now afford *iaidōka* a variety of venues in which to compete: individual *waza* (or *kata*), team synchronized *waza, katachi,* and *tameshigiri.* Each of these provides valuable training opportunities. For example, individual *waza* events offer the challenge of perfecting two or three *waza* for presentation under intense, nerve-wracking conditions. Team synchronized *waza* add the factor of coordinating movements with those of teammates, which is an excellent way of practicing *zanshin* under tense and distracting circumstances. Likewise, performing *katachi* or *tameshigiri* under the scrutiny of judges and spectators provides an excellent environment for learning to maintain *heijōshin.*

While it is not appropriate to list detailed rules of competition here, there are some basic principles of competition and criteria for judging competitors' performance that should apply in nearly all competitive situations.

Competitors should be required to represent a style of Japanese swordsmanship, whether it is called *iaidō, iaijutsu, battō-hō, battōjutsu,* or otherwise, that is recognized as authentic by a legitimate governing body in Japan. In representing that style, competitors should then be required to perform only techniques from that style. Competitors should also be required to wear the uniform appropriate to the style they are representing. Typically this will be a *hakama* and *keikogi* (top) or *montsuki.* These standards eliminate flamboyant clothing and non-standard techniques that might impair impartial judging of the competitors.

Prior to commencement of the competition all equipment (*iaitō, bokken, shinken,* etc.) should receive a safety inspection by one or more judges qualified to determine its condition. This inspection ensures that *tsuka* are secure and *mekugi* are sound, blades lack any cracks, chips, or deformations that could lead to breakage, and *saya* are in sound condition. All equipment used in competition should be required to be traditional, meaning that *iaitō* and *shinken* would have traditional *koshirae* (fittings) and wooden *saya* (not metal reproductions or modern military fittings), and

bokken be of sturdy, unpainted hardwood of standard length for the competitor. For safety, "live" blades (*shinken*) should not be permitted for use other than *tameshigiri* without special permission of the judges or tournament organizing committee.

General demeanor and conduct should be appropriate for a *samurai*. Respect should always be accorded to fellow competitors and judges, and any breach of etiquette should be subject to penalty or disqualification.

TYPES OF COMPETITIVE EVENTS

Events in an *iaidō* tournament will generally fall into the categories of *waza* (or *kata*), *tameshigiri*, team synchronized *waza*, and *katachi* or *kumitachi*.

Since the *waza* in most traditional styles of *iaidō* are brief, a *waza* competition will typically consist of performing three *waza* in succession to afford the judges ample opportunities to assess the skills of the competitors. It is not uncommon to place a time limit, usually between one and two minutes for completion of the three techniques, to ensure equity of performance time among competitors and pacing of the tournament.

Katachi competition, which is called *kumitachi* in some styles, is a form of team competition in which two partners perform between one and three of the *Tachiuchi no Kurai* (or an equivalent from the competitors' style). Again, it is common to place a time limit on such performances to maintain the pace of the tournament and ensure that all competitors receive roughly equal performance time.

In team synchronized *waza*, or *dantai embu* (group performance), teams customarily consisting of three competitors perform a predetermined number of *waza* or *kata* (usually between one and three) from their styles. Once again, a time limit is often imposed to ensure fairness.

Tameshigiri competition can include both individual and team events. Some *tameshigiri* competitions will include separate events for cutting with *wakizashi* in addition to the *daitō*. Another event that is sometimes included in *tameshigiri* competition is *dōdan*, in which a number of horizontal targets (usually *tatami-omote*) are stacked atop one another and the winner is determined by cutting the largest number of stacked targets.

In each of these events, scoring can be either by a point system, with the highest overall score winning the event, or single elimination, in which two competitors compete head-to-head at each stage of competition.

The single-elimination format offers a strong parallel to ancient combat. When any two competitors meet, only one "survives" to face another opponent. This format is strongly recommended, especially for *yūdansha* (Black Belts), since it requires the equivalent of a life-or-death focus of the competitors. The other key advantage is that it is easier to judge, and will usually be more objective in determining the final winner of each event, particularly if there are many competitors. It is difficult to score a large number of competitors fairly to ensure that the scoring of those competitors performing late in the match are judged by the same standards applied to those performing early in the competition. Often, a performance that might garner a moderately high score early in a competition would be judged more severely later in the match, after several superior performances have been observed. Conversely, when two competitors are judged side-by-side, it is usually evident which of them displayed superior technique. Rather than trying to assign an arbitrary numeric score to each performance, in single elimination the judges simply raise the flag—either red (*aka*) or white (*shiro*)—to indicate the superior competitor in each match. A single-elimination system will nearly always result in the two best competitors meeting in the deciding match. This *kohaku* (red and white) system can be readily used for both individual and team events.

GENERAL PRINCIPLES OF JUDGING

It is recommended that each event be determined by a panel of three or five judges. Each competitor or team is affixed with either a red or white ribbon. At the conclusion of their performances, whether in *waza, katachi, kumitachi,* or *tameshigiri,* each judge raises the flag of the competitor whom they believe was superior. The competitor receiving a majority wins the match and is elevated to the next round. A draw or dual disqualification is indicated by crossing the two flags.

Individual *waza* should generally be judged by:

- Sincerity and correctness of *reigi* (etiquette),

- The spirit, demeanor, and personality of the participant during performance, and
- Technical merits, especially crispness of technique, focus, posture, eye contact, breathing, and straight travel of the sword.

Refer to Chapter 16 for a more detailed description of the technical aspects judges should observe for scoring purposes.

Synchronized team *waza* should generally be judged by:

- Synchronization of movement with other team members, and
- The judging elements of Individual *Waza* listed above.

Katachi or *kumitachi* will be judged by spirit of attack and defense, focus, maintaining proper attack and defense distance with opponent, unity of timing with opponent, sharpness of technique, and coordination of attack and defense with opponent.

Tameshigiri will generally be judged by:

- The straightness of each cut (not curved or scooped),
- The angle of each cut (at 45 degrees for *kesagiri/gyaku-kesagiri;* level for *yoko-ichi-mon-ji*),
- The completeness of each cut (not leaving a "skin" or piece still connected),
- The difficulty of the cut attempted (type and thickness of material, direction of cut, etc.), and
- Cleanness of cut (not causing the stand to wobble or topple).

For safety, the rules should require that cuts from the competitor's right-to-left be made with the right foot forward and left-to-right cuts be made with the left foot forward. This minimizes the possibility of a competitor accidentally cutting his own leg from a miss or a deflected cut.

A *tameshigiri* competitor should be disqualified for missing the target completely, allowing the sword to strike the floor on follow-through, striking the peg holding the material, knocking over the stand, a cut that is less than seventy-five percent complete, bending the sword sufficiently to prevent *nōtō,* or executing any action that injures or endangers him or his competitors.

CLASSIFICATION OF COMPETITORS

For equitable judging, competitors should be divided into classifications by relative experience level. At a minimum, there should be three classifications of competitors in each event: *kyūsha* (below black belt), *shodan* through *sandan*, and *yondan* and above. In tournaments with a large number of *kyūsha* competitors, it is appropriate to divide them into two or three additional groupings so that outright novices are not forced to compete against highly experienced *kyūsha*.

TOURNAMENT ETIQUETTE

Tournament organizers will typically insist on strict etiquette during the competition. Breaches of etiquette, particularly anything potentially hazardous, such as careless handling of a sword, will often result in disqualification or even expulsion from the competition.

This is another prime reason to participate periodically in tournaments. It provides an excellent venue and appropriate circumstances in which to practice the highest levels of *reihō*. By placing yourself in these circumstances, you have the opportunity to heighten your awareness of the effect and impression your behavior makes on others. Here are just a few examples:

The respect you have for yourself and your competitors is displayed in part by the care you take in dressing appropriately (in *hakama* and *keikogi* or *montsuki*) for the event. Is your *hakama* neatly pressed and properly worn? This demonstrates your respect for yourself, your competitors, the judges, the spectators, and your property.

Removing your shoes when entering the tournament floor, and wearing your *tabi* in the competition area similarly demonstrate your respect for the tournament organizers, fellow competitors, judges, and spectators. Likewise, wearing your shoes outside the competition area keeps your *tabi* clean and demonstrates your respect for the venue.

Of course, always exhibiting a respectful attitude toward the judges and tournament officials is a basic expectation at a traditional *iaidō* tournament. Even a questioning glance at a judge or official should be considered disrespectful. The fact is that judges are human, too, and will

occasionally make a questionable call or ruling. An *iaidōka* realizes that in the great scheme of things, one call this way or that is immaterial. In the long run, they will even themselves out, with as many going in your favor as against you. So, why risk offending the judge over something so trivial? If, as *iaidōka,* we would put our lives life at risk to perform *kirioroshi* in order to give our enemies a noble death, we should certainly put our doubts and feelings aside to preserve the dignity of a judge who is truly our friend!

Other ways of showing respect include: remaining aware of how the tournament is progressing and when you are scheduled to compete rather than pestering officials or fellow competitors to find out, remaining quiet and still when you are not competing (so as not to distract fellow competitors, judges, or spectators), and staying clear of doorways and walkways so that others can easily pass. In short, an *iaidō* tournament is an opportunity to place the needs and interests of others ahead of our own for a few hours and to practice true compassion.

勝利への道

Chapter 18

Shōri e no Michi

The Way to Victorious Life

If you take the easy path, life is difficult;
if you take the difficult path, life is easy.

This book contains enough instruction for several lifetimes. It will take a dozen years of training to become adept at the physical techniques alone, and decades more to master them and imprint them with your own personality and spirit. The philosophy contained in this book is condensed from the lives of many of Japan's greatest warriors, and it would be the height of arrogance for any of us to presume that we could assimilate all of it in a single lifetime. Bear in mind also that we have only presented the major tenets of *samurai* philosophy in this volume. An authoritative and exhaustive study on the philosophy of *samurai* swordsmanship would require a work of encyclopedic proportions.

This manual can serve you for a lifetime of training, enjoyment, and personal enrichment, and can then be passed on to your children and their children in much the same way the art of *iaijutsu* itself has been passed from generation to generation. We want to close by providing some practical ways to apply this book to your everyday life; to help you achieve true victory over the circumstances and adversities we all face in our family lives, jobs, and ambitions, and to bring you and those around you greater joy.

To begin with, here are twenty-one precepts distilled from ancient *samurai* philosophy:

武士の心得

SAMURAI NO KOKORŌE

Precepts of the Samurai

1. Know yourself. *(Jikō o shiru koto.)*

The foundation of all personal growth is to truly know yourself, that which seems both good and bad in yourself. To understand your faults as well as your virtues allows you to begin working to remedy your faults, strengthen your virtues, and find ways to work around those aspects of your personality and character that you may be unable to change.

2. Always follow through on commitments. *(Jibun no kimeta koto wa saigo made jikkō suru koto.)*

A commitment is essentially a promise you make to yourself. Commitments can be as shallow as going on a diet or as deep as marriage; the marriage vow is the promise you make to your spouse; the marriage commitment is the promise you make to yourself. Each unfulfilled commitment is a personal failure that can be deeply disappointing and damaging to your self-esteem. Think carefully before you make any commitment. Make only those commitments that are truly valuable to you. And don't overburden yourself with so many commitments that you are doomed to failure from the start.

3. Respect everyone. *(Ikanaru hito demo sonke suru koto.)*

If you have gained nothing else from this book, the concept of respect should be indelibly etched into your mind. The true *samurai,* as we have often stated, respected even his enemies. Respect for others—for their ideas, beliefs, culture, and human rights—is the bridge to mutual understanding and ultimately to peaceful coexistence with others.

4. Hold strong convictions that cannot be altered by your circumstances. *(Kankyō ni sayu sarenai tsuyoi shinnen o motsu koto.)*

It's one thing to develop strong convictions; it's quite another to hold to those convictions even when it appears foolish in the eyes of the world to do so. We now live in an era in which welfare and insurance fraud are

commonplace roads to financial success, where TV and movies have glamorized promiscuity to an extent that sexually transmitted diseases are epidemic, where easy money is more highly revered than hard work, and where commitment to family and religious values is publicly ridiculed.

Incredible strength of conviction is necessary to withstand such social and economic pressures—pressures that have led our present generation into a malaise of alcohol and drug abuse, immorality, greed, laziness, and self-indulgence that is out of control and bringing the entire world to ruin.

5. Don't make an enemy of yourself. *(Mizu kara teki o tsukuranai koto.)*

Don't be your own worst enemy! Jealousy, greed, and self-pity will ensure that you have plenty of enemies if you try to accomplish something worthwhile with your life. If you treat people with respect and compassion you won't add to the number of your opponents by your own attitude.

6. Live without regrets. *(Koto ni oite kōkaisezu.)*

This is a double-edged admonition. First, don't wallow in regret over your past mistakes. Take responsibility for them and learn from them—and then put them behind you. Accept the fact that the past cannot be undone, find something of value (such as a lesson learned) in your mistakes, and go forward with the knowledge that you have taken another step toward perfection of character.

Second, if you know—or even suspect—that you will regret an action you are considering, don't do it! Heed the warning of your conscience in advance. As you strive toward improving yourself and grow in compassion and self-awareness, you will find that your conscience allows you to make fewer and fewer regrettable decisions.

7. Be certain to make a good first impression. *(Hito to no deai o taisetsu ni suru koto.)*

As the old saying goes, "First impressions are lasting impressions." A good first impression is a barometer of the kind of life you are leading. If you consistently leave good impressions on those you meet, it is likely that you are living a more fulfilling and positive life than someone who consistently leaves a poor first impression.

8. Don't cling to the past. *(Miren o motanai koto.)*

This is more than simply not regretting the past; it means to let go of both the good and the bad. All too often we meet people who sacrifice their own present or future because they are still mired in the past. Their stories of "the good old days" are a telltale sign that nothing of import is occuring in their lives now.

Our past is a good history lesson, and it is as valuable as a road map to our future. But in order to move ahead, we must let go of past glories as well as past failures.

9. Never break a promise. *(Yakusoku o yaburanai koto.)*

To be a person of character you must say what you mean and mean what you say. It is really that simple. Don't make promises you can't or won't keep, and if you do make a promise, do whatever is necessary to keep it. Remember: the disappointment and distrust caused by only one broken promise can undo ten years of kept promises.

10. Don't depend on other people. *(Hito ni tayoranai koto.)*

This precept is a bit paradoxical. We cannot succeed in life without the help of others. We cannot have fulfilling relationships with other people without allowing them to become deeply involved in our lives. Yet, we must not depend on them!

What this really means is that we must take personal responsibility for our lives. Children depend on their parents, but adults must be responsible for themselves. We cannot rely on family, friends, or the government to take care of us, direct us, or make us happy. With realistic expectations of others, we will feel genuine gratitude for their contributions and we will avoid anger and disappointment if others let us down.

11. Don't speak ill of others. *(Hito o onshitsu shinai koto.)*

If you have a grievance with someone, the respectful and proper way to deal with it is to speak directly with that person, not about that person to others. Compassionate confrontation is the core of good relationships. It is easy to compliment people, but it takes real courage and true friend-

ship to openly discuss with others the things that bother you. Yet we can only have deep friendships if we are willing to take the emotional risks of raising difficult issues and settling them. If we do, then both people benefit. If we don't, both will suffer.

12. Don't be afraid of anything. *(Ikanaku koto ni oite mo osorenai koto.)*

Fear robs you of *heijōshin* and prevents you from thinking clearly and reacting naturally. It ignites the "fight or flight" reaction, yet often neither fighting nor fleeing is the most beneficial response. This is especially true of the flight response, since our avoidance of all but physical danger usually takes the form of emotional barriers or escapism into drug and alcohol use or submission to cult behavior.

It is always preferable to face your problems, whether they are physical dangers or the everyday obstacles and challenges of life. After all, as a *samurai,* you have already conquered the fear of death, and are instead pursuing a noble death (see Chapter 2). So, since you do not fear death, why should you fear anything that life might throw your way?

13. Respect the opinions of others. *(Hito no iken o soncho suru koto.)*

The opinions of others have been shaped by a lifetime of experience and thought, just as yours have. It is important not to preconceive different opinions or ideas as "wrong." The other person's opinion may be just as well substantiated as your own—perhaps even more so. If you can set aside your desire to be "right" and focus only on the opinion which has the most value, you will find your attitude encourages others to share their ideas freely, which will in turn provide you with greater insight and more options from which to choose.

Don't forget the lesson of Takeda Shingen, who encouraged and rewarded dissent among his subordinates. It was that very trait that made him one of the greatest leaders in history!

14. Have compassion and understanding for everyone. *(Hito ni taishite omoiyari o motsu koto.)*

True compassion cannot be achieved without deep understanding of human nature and motivations, so this precept implies the need to really

know people. This is especially crucial for leaders, and it can be seen in such examples as Takeda Shingen, Abraham Lincoln, and countless others. Those who take a genuine interest in people inspire great loyalty, dedication, and desire to succeed. There is great truth in the axiom: "People don't care how much you know until they know how much you care."

Compassion is the key to discovering what motivates people. If you sincerely care, you will be interested enough to learn their deepest desires, hopes, and fears and eventually grow to understand them. Compassion is also the key to developing healthy and harmonious relationships with family and friends, the key to appreciating and validating the points of view and feelings of others, even if they differ from yours.

15. Don't be impetuous. *(Karuhazumi ni koto o okosanai koto.)*

The *samurai* of old were bound by a strict code of honor and lived in a society in which the slightest insult could result in a duel to the death. In addition, *iaijutsu* was founded during a tumultuous period of civil wars in which loyalties were constantly changing with the tides of shifting power among warlords and their vassals. In such times, the implications of every action had to be carefully considered beforehand. The slightest mistake could cost you your life and bring about the ruination of your family.

Even though the consequences are not as severe, it is not so different today. Rash decisions or words can cost a new job or a promotion; impulsive financial decisions can throw your family into bankruptcy. If you maintain *heijōshin* and do not allow your emotions and impulses to dictate your decisions, you will enjoy greater abundance in all aspects of life.

16. Even little things must be attended to. *(Chiisa na koto demo taisetsu ni suru koto.)*

There is a common saying, "Take care of the little things and the big things will take care of themselves." There is a great deal of truth in this dictum. If unattended, the little things in life soon compound into big things. Just as small physical tasks, such as personal and financial details, can add up into serious problems if not taken care of, a series of seemingly insignificant emotional hurts will quickly escalate into major conflicts.

It is not always necessary to personally perform the little tasks; it is only

important to see that they get done. If your lifestyle requires you to concentrate on major issues, then you must delegate the small tasks and ensure that they are done.

17. Never forget to be appreciative. *(Kansha no kimochi o wasurenai koto.)*

A sincere word of thanks is often better than payment for a favor done. Most of us enjoy helping others and gain a sense of satisfaction in knowing that we have done something unselfish, but we also quickly grow tired of doing things for people who do not show any appreciation for our efforts. If we show genuine appreciation for the assistance of others, there will always be friends willing to help us through difficult times. But if we fail to show our appreciation, we will quickly become known as a "taker," and our acquaintances will lose all respect for us.

This is also a prime example of taking care of the little things. Just the simple courtesy of a "thank you" to a friend or loved one, if left unsaid, can build up into great anger and discontent with time and repetition. But that same simple courtesy, if never forgotten, will keep our friends and family steadfast by our side even through the darkest of times.

18. Be first to seize the opportunity. *(Hito yori sossenshi kōdō suru koto.)*

We must not act impetuously. But once we have reached a well-considered decision we must act quickly and precipitously. As the old saying goes, "Opportunity knocks but once." We usually get only one chance, and that chance only lasts for a limited time.

This is a lesson we practice often in *iaijutsu*. Our opponent will give us few opportunities to win the encounter, and those opportunities will last only moments at best. So we must seize an opportunity the instant it arises. The same holds true in business and other areas of life. True opportunities will be rare and short-lived, so we must be prepared for them and act swiftly when they are presented.

19. Make a desperate effort. *(Isshō kenmei monogoto o suru koto.)*

Here is another lesson direct from iaijutsu training. In important matters, a "strong" effort usually results in only mediocre results. Whenever we are attempting anything truly worthwhile, our effort must be as if

our lives are at stake, just as if we were under a physical attack! It is this extraordinary effort—an effort that drives us beyond what we thought we were capable of—that ensures victory in battle and success in life's endeavors.

20. Have a plan for your life. *(Jinsei no mokuhyō o sadameru koto.)*

If you don't know where you are going, how will you know when you get there? To have a plan for your life is such an obvious admonition that it almost seems ludicrous to mention it here. Yet sadly, less than ten percent of us have a clear, written plan for our lives. And of those who do have some kind of plan, less than ten percent have planned for anything other than just the financial aspects. The average person spends more time planning a holiday weekend than in planning their whole life.

While financial matters are an important part of an overall life plan, it is equally—if not more—important to set goals for all the other areas of your life. The necessities of life keep economic matters at the forefront of our thoughts. Having specific goals for the other areas of our life helps prevent financial matters from crowding everything else out. Your life plan should also be written, so that you can use it as a road map to your achievements and to help keep you accountable for staying on track.

However, a good life plan does not have to be highly detailed. An outline is usually sufficient. At a minimum, it should include specific goals and timetables for achieving them, in the following areas:

1. Family goals: This broad category concerns such issues as family relationships, marriage, children, where you will live, and most other lifestyle decisions.
2. Social involvement: Your social life can include clubs, social status, political involvement, and will often affect such areas as recreation, charitable activities, and the like.
3. Personal accomplishments: These are your "trophies," how you want to leave your mark on the world, what you will be remembered by.
4. Financial objectives: This area should focus primarily on the income and expenses you generate. The things you purchase and own (cars, home, etc.) are planned under other categories. Your financial plan

outlines how you will obtain the money needed to acquire those things that you have planned for elsewhere.

5. Intellectual development: This should include goals for both formal education (high school, college, advanced degrees, etc.) and informal areas (topics you might study—even become expert in—outside of academic institutions).
6. Emotional maturity: Just as it helps to have definite, measurable objectives in financial areas, you should plan for your emotional maturation. How will you ensure that you continue to mature and improve your character? Will you attend courses, read self-help books, or join organizations that promote this? How will you establish an underlying philosophy or ethical basis by which to guide your behavior?
7. Spiritual growth: You will not be a whole person until you have resolved your quest for meaning in life. You must deal with the issues that most of us consider religious: Is there a God? How does the existence or nonexistence of God affect my life and behavior? Is there a hereafter? What will become of my soul when my body dies? Do I need to make spiritual preparations for afterlife? What is my role in the universe? Why am I here? Is there a purpose to life beyond mere carnal pleasures? Are there moral absolutes? By what spiritual path can I find these answers? These questions require deep soul-searching and careful investigation. You must be careful to seek truth, rather than what is popular, self-serving, or convenient to believe. And your quest for the answers to such crucial spiritual questions should be at least as well-planned as your family vacation!

To help you focus on what is truly important to you, as opposed to those things that would merely be nice to accomplish if you had a chance, just ask yourself this question: "If I died at the end of this _____ (day, week, month, year, etc.), what accomplishments would leave me with absolutely no regrets?"

Ask this question for your long-term (five, ten, and twenty year) goals, medium-term (one to three year) goals, and short-term (weekly, monthly, quarterly) plans. Then, use the answers to set your truly important objectives for each of these planning periods.

This is truly a *samurai*'s perspective—the perspective of a warrior who routinely faced the real possibility of untimely death. If you knew with certainty that you would die exactly one week from today, just think what you would really do during those final seven days. You would make sure that all your personal and financial affairs were as orderly as possible, so as not to inconvenience your heirs. Petty squabbles and hurt feelings would suddenly seem inconsequential, and you would spend hours cherishing the company of your closest friends and loved ones. And you would probably take the time to do one or two really important things that you always wished you had done. Those are precisely the types of things your short-term objectives should concentrate on.

On the other hand, if you knew you would die in exactly three years, you would plan more types of activities and goals. You would set aside money for events planned months ahead. You might schedule a dream vacation to some distant land, or devote several months to working for a cause you believe in deeply. These are appropriate medium-range goals.

Lastly, if you know you would die in exactly ten, or perhaps twenty years, you would make other, more far-reaching plans and prioritize them differently. You might plan a dream home to share with your family for the last ten of those twenty years, or establish a fund for your children's college education, or set aside time to research and write a book, or plan a change of careers.

This is truly the secret of living without regrets. If you lived each day as if you were scheduled to die at midnight that night, you would make sure you spent every waking hour accomplishing only the most important things in life and you would devote the most time possible to the people who mean the most to you. At the end of such a day, you would have no regrets.

Regardless of whether the goals you set are lofty or simple, once you have established a plan for your life your next step is to begin applying the other principles in this book to accomplishing that plan. Chief among these is always follow through on commitments. Having made a commitment to achieve your written goals, don't stop working toward them, especially when you encounter setbacks.

Not everything you try in life will succeed. The more you try to accom-

plish, the more failures you will experience. The most successful people in the world are the ones who have failed the most often, because they have tried more things! You cannot allow failures, obstacles, and setbacks to affect your confidence and desire to succeed. Remember: the only people who never fail are the ones who never try.

In *iaijutsu,* there is no such thing as a draw. In every battle, you either win or lose, and to lose is to die. The same is essentially true for your ambitions in life. There is no middle ground; you either succeed or fail.

You can think of your life plan like a marathon race: you must complete all twenty-six miles. If you don't cross the finish line, it doesn't matter if you ran only ten or all but the last ten feet, you still didn't *finish*—you didn't run a marathon. A 10K run is still a major accomplishment, but it isn't a marathon. And when you are running a marathon, the judges don't hand out 10K medals to the ones who don't finish.

So, treat your life plan like *iaijutsu*—don't accept anything less than winning. In this way you will be sure you achieve your goals.

This also means you must plan thoughtfully. Set realistic goals, and know what you really want to accomplish. Set only those goals that you are willing to sacrifice everything to achieve. If you are really willing to settle for completing a 10K run instead of a marathon, then make a 10K run your life goal. Don't have "marathon" in your plan and think it will be alright to fall back to a 10K. It won't be. At your very core, you will think of yourself as a failure if you do not accomplish what you set out to do. It is much better, in every way, to have a 10K goal and push on to run a marathon than to have a marathon goal and fall short with a 10K. Conversely, if a marathon is really what you have your heart set on achieving, then make it your goal, and then make a desperate effort to finish the race!

21. Never lose your Beginner's Spirit. *(Shoshin o wasurubekarazaru koto.)*

This admonition is much deeper than it at first seems. On the surface it means to maintain the freshness and excitement that you bring to any new endeavor as a beginner. Don't lose your eagerness to improve and learn and experience. And don't lose a beginner's humility and openness to instruction. But it also means to never lose touch with the basics in any area of life.

It is so easy to find ourselves caught up in the complexities of modern living that we lose track of the basics—those elements that bring true meaning and joy to life—love and friendship, an appreciation of nature, and the simple things of life itself.

In times of stress, difficulty, and setbacks, keeping your Beginner's Spirit means to go back to the fundamentals to find the solutions to your problems. The answers are seldom found in the complexities. Our hardships and failures are usually the result of losing touch with the basic principles of life, not the intricacies and minor details.

When adversities arise, you can actually use these twenty-one precepts as a diagnostic tool to find the area of life in which you may have gotten off-track. Just start at the top and start asking yourself the questions: Do I truly know myself? Have I followed through on all my commitments? Have I been disrespectful to someone? As you work your way down the list, if you are honest with yourself, you will probably find the cause of your difficulties.

LIFE'S LABORATORY

The precepts of *Samurai no Kokoro-e* apply as aptly to life in general as to *iaijutsu* specifically, from knowing yourself to keeping your Beginner's Spirit. One of the major benefits of *iaijutsu* training, then, is the opportunity to use the *dōjō* as a laboratory in which to experiment with, test, and perfect these principles under controlled circumstances. Once refined, you can then apply them in your own life.

Every day we can improve our character and experience the value of these concepts in the microcosm of the *dōjō*. We can learn by trial and error under the caring, corrective eye of our *sensei* and in the company of understanding and compassionate fellow students who share our struggle with the same lessons—before attempting to apply them in the broader world of daily life.

RISE ABOVE THE ORDINARY

Animals live only day-by-day or even hour-by-hour, driven by instinct and reaction to their environment, and satisfied with whatever outcome befalls them. Only humans have freedom of choice, the ability to set goals, to establish principles and ideals by which to live, and to strive for an improved life despite the obstacles and circumstances of their environment. It is this very ability which creates stress, worry, fear, and uncertainty, but it is also this ability which allows us to persevere and overcome the trials of life and experience true victory and joy.

Those who have neither hope nor ideals to live by are living only on the level of brute animals. Your first step in rising above a primitive existence is to establish strong convictions which will form the basis for an enriched and rewarding life and give you the emotional stamina to endure its hardships and trials.

A person of high ideals and character appreciates the laws of nature and the fundamental laws and mores of his or her society. Even if you disagree with how some of these laws are enforced or applied, such principles give you a foundation for exercising sound judgment, even in complex and difficult circumstances. If you really know yourself and have compassion for yourself (as well as others), then every action or decision you make will polish your character—even those which turn out adversely—because you will accept responsibility and continue to strive for improvement.

It is this strength of character and commitment to continual improvement that will set you apart from the ordinary and mundane, and allow you to remain unaffected by your environment and circumstances. With a spirit of purpose and a dedication to continual self-improvement, you will learn to benefit almost equally from adversity as from success. When you can do this, you will no longer find your emotions rising and falling with your changing fortunes. You will know and experience *heijōshin*.

DON'T BE A CIRCUS ELEPHANT

Nearly all of us have seen a circus live, or at least watched one on television. Although the trapeze and high-wire acts are more daring and the

acrobats more amazing, there is a magnificent, quiet power to the performance of the circus elephants. It is remarkable that they can raise and balance their enormous weight in a handstand. And for all their size and strength, they are so gentle and obedient with their handlers.

But one of the most interesting aspects of elephant behavior occurs when their performance is over. If you walk outside the Big Top when their act is finished, you will see the trainers tether the elephants by slender chains to foot-long stakes driven into the ground. What is amazing about this is that, with almost no effort at all, these mighty creatures could snap those inadequate shackles or uproot them from the ground, yet they remain leashed in place as if helpless. Why?

It is a result of conditioning. When the elephants were babies, they were kept tethered with heavy-gauge chains lashed to stout, immovable posts. Their attempts to pull free only chafed their ankles raw. After so many weeks and months of this, the baby elephants learned to avoid the pain by not tugging at their shackles. Once they were conditioned in this fashion, only a slender chain was necessary to keep them from trying to roam about.

People are conditioned in the same way by their experiences in life. We all develop ways in which we are physically or emotionally restrained by the pain or humiliation of previous mishaps. Sometimes the result is obvious, like the wallflowers who are afraid to ask someone to dance because the person turned them down. But many of our conditioned behavior patterns are invisible to casual observation, such as the ways in which many of us mask parts of our identity with humor or bravado or deft conversation.

To perfect our character, to fulfill our purpose in life, to live up to our fullest potential, we must not allow ourselves to be held back by imaginary restraints. We must always be willing to try. And be willing to try again! We cannot allow a previous setback, failure, or humiliation condition us not to try again. How many wallflowers have missed out on a "Yes" from the person of their dreams only because they first got a "No" from another, and were not willing to risk another minor humiliation?

To become all that you are capable of being, you have to be willing to risk all that you already are.

SAIGO NO HITO KOTO

A Closing Thought

Yu wa yasuku, okonai wa muzukashii.
Okonai wa yasuku, satoru koto muzukashii.
Talk is easy; action is difficult.
But, action is easy; true understanding is difficult!

The meaning of this proverb is fairly obvious. But, like all of *iaijutsu* philosophy, it has deeper and more subtle shadings of meaning the more it is contemplated.

At the obvious level, it tells you to get busy right now with your *iaijutsu* training. Thinking or talking about it are worthless unless you *do* something about it. So begin and persist in your training. Take action!

As you do so, the truth of the second half of the saying will become apparent. Compared to motivating yourself to action, the Herculean task of acquiring true understanding of *iaijutsu* will prove to be a life-long endeavor.

If you are diligent in your training and attempt to practice *iaijutsu* philosophy in daily life, you will soon discover a subtler truth: that knowing *iaijutsu* philosophy and being able to explain it is simple compared to applying it consistently in everyday life. Likewise, as you begin to apply *iaijutsu* philosophy on a daily basis, you will find that a true understanding of its limitless depth and applicability is a monumental but worthy undertaking.

Your journey will be fraught with difficulty, frustrations, adversities, and setbacks—bruises, blisters, aches, and painful nicks on the body, as well as the soul—but liberally seasoned with incomparable joys and triumphs. It is a journey of self-discovery, self-enrichment, and the discovery and enrichment of others.

Come join us on this journey of victorious living!

無双直伝英信流居合術

国際日本古武道直心会

武士の心得

Appendix A

SAMURAI NO KOKORO-E

Precepts of the Samurai

Since the *Samurai no Kokoro-e* is a solid foundation for developing *samurai* spirit and applying *iaijutsu* principles to everyday life, we have prepared this quick reference sheet of these basic principles which can be copied, posted, and easily reviewed on a daily basis.

1. Know yourself. (*Jikō o shiru koto.*)
2. Always follow through on commitments. (*Jibun no kimeta koto wa saigo made jikkō suru koto.*)
3. Respect everyone. (*Ikanaru hito demo sonke suru koto.*)
4. Hold strong convictions that cannot be altered by your circumstances. (*Kankyō ni sayu sarenai tsuyoi shinnen o motsu koto.*)
5. Don't make an enemy of yourself. (*Mizu kara teki o tsukuranai koto.*)
6. Live without regrets. (*Koto ni oite kōkaisezu.*)
7. Be certain to make a good first impression. (*Hito to no deai o taisetsu ni suru koto.*)
8. Don't cling to the past. (*Miren o motanai koto.*)
9. Never break a promise. (*Yakusoku o yaburanai koto.*)
10. Don't depend on other people. (*Hito ni tayoranai koto.*)
11. Don't speak ill of others. (*Hito o onshitsu shinai koto.*)
12. Don't be afraid of anything. (*Ikanaku koto ni oite mo osorenai koto.*)
13. Respect the opinions of others. (*Hito no iken o soncho suru koto.*)
14. Have compassion and understanding for everyone. (*Hito ni taishite omoiyari o motsu koto.*)
15. Don't be impetuous. (*Karuhazumi ni koto o okosanai koto.*)

16. Even little things must be attended to. (*Chiisa na koto demo taisetsu ni suru koto.*)
17. Never forget to be appreciative. (*Kansha no kimochi o wasurenai koto.*)
18. Be first to seize the opportunity. (*Hito yori sossenshi kōdō suru koto.*)
19. Make a desperate effort. (*Isshō kenmei monogoto o suru koto.*)
20. Have a plan for your life. (*Jinsei no mokuhyō o sadameru koto.*)
21. Never lose your "Beginner's Spirit." (*Shoshin o wasurubekarazaru koto.*)

武士の心得

Appendix B

CONTACT INFORMATION AND SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIALS

The authors welcome contact from readers of *Flashing Steel.* We will do our best to answer your questions, provide additional information and training resources, and help you to achieve your goals as a martial artist. The best way to contact the authors is through the *hombu dōjō* website, where current contact information is maintained. The URL is http://jikishin-kai.com.

The Jikishin-Kai International (JKI) has prepared a set of comprehensive instructional videos demonstrating all of the *waza* presented in *Flashing Steel.* These videos and other supplemental instruction materials are available through the JKI website.

Volume 1: *Shoden Waza*

Volume 2: *Chūden Waza*

Volume 3: *Okuden Suwari Waza*

Volume 4: *Okuden Tachiwaza* and *Itomagoi Waza*

Volume 5: *Tachiuchi no Kurai (Katachi)*

Volume 6: 10 *Seitei Kata*

Volume 7: History & Philosophy Interview with Shimabukuro *Hanshi*

The JKI is always preparing and updating its instructional materials, including instructional videos on *Shindō Musō-Ryū Jōdō* and *Shitō-Ryū Karate-dō.* Shimabukuro *Hanshi* and Pellman *Sensei* have also collaborated on the book, *Katsu Jin Ken: Living Karate, the Way to Self-Mastery,* which is available through the JKI website. We encourage readers to check regularly for updates, news, seminar schedules, and other information of interest.

Each year, the JKI also schedules a number of seminars led by its most senior instructors, including Shimabukuro *Hanshi.* The JKI's annual

gasshuku (training convention) is the capstone experience of these events, held in a variety of locations around the world in order to provide the broadest possible opportunities for participation. Information on seminars and the annual *gasshuku* is also available on the JKI website.

筆者紹介

Hissha Shōkai

About the Authors

SHIMABUKURO MASAYUKI SHIHAN

Masayuki Shimabukuro was born in March, 1948 in Osaka, Japan. His interest in martial arts began to flower when he was a teenager, studying *jūdō, karate-dō,* Okinawan *kobudō* weapons, and other traditional Japanese martial arts. He achieved *dan* ranking in several of these arts before focusing his attention predominantly on *iaijutsu,* the art of *samurai* swordsmanship in face-to-face combat.

Since relocating to the United States in 1976, Shimabukuro *Shihan* has taught martial arts at his own *dōjō,* as well as conducting numerous demonstrations, seminars, and television appearances. In addition to his stature as a leading authority on *samurai* swordsmanship, he is a highly accomplished and well respected *karate-ka,* and is president of the International *Shitō-Ryū Karate-dō Jikishin-Kai.*

Shimabukuro *Hanshi* is presently 8th *dan* in *Musō Jikiden Eishin-Ryū Iaijutsu,* and holds the highly coveted title of *Hanshi* (Exemplary Warrior). As the highest ranking disciple of Miura *Hanshi* and chairman of the *Nippon Kobudō Jikishin-Kai* USA and the *Nippon Kobudō Jikishin-Kai* International, he is responsible for disseminating *Eishin-Ryū Iaijutsu* and maintaining its high standards of instruction worldwide. His duties regularly take him throughout North, Central, and South America and Europe performing *iaijutsu* demonstrations and seminars, certifying *dōjō,* and training *iaijutsu* instructors.

In addition, Shimabukuro *Hanshi* has been appointed chairman of the *Sekai Dentō Budō Renmei* (World Traditional Martial Arts Federation), a global organization dedicated to the preservation and promulgation of

authentic, traditional Japanese martial arts throughout the world. His role includes general leadership of the federation, as well as teaching and promoting *Eishin-Ryū* and other traditional Japanese martial arts at seminars worldwide.

LEONARD J. PELLMAN SENSEI

Len Pellman was introduced to martial arts at the age of fourteen when, after two years of pleading with them, his parents enrolled him in a *jūdō* school in San Diego, California, in 1966. He continued his *jūdō* training and was introduced to *kendō* and *karate-dō* while an exchange student to Japan in 1968. After returning to the U.S., he enrolled in the college *karate* program at San Diego State University. His fascination with *iaijutsu* began after he graduated college in 1973, when he returned to Japan for nine months to pursue additional martial arts training and visit the family with whom he had stayed as an exchange student five years earlier. At the wedding of his exchange student "sister" in Toyohashi, Japan, her uncle, a 5th *dan* at the time, performed an *iaidō* demonstration (common at traditional Japanese weddings) which kept Pellman *Sensei* spellbound with its elegance, artistry, and intense focus and precision. Despite his interest, he was unable to find a qualified *iaijutsu* instructor until he was introduced to Shimabukuro *Hanshi* in 1991.

Having started a *karate* program at his church in 1989, Pellman *Sensei* opened his first commercial dōjō in 1992. A career change forced him to sell that *dōjō* and move to Colorado, where he continued teaching martial arts to a small group of faithful students. After a subsequent move to Indiana, he was able to re-establish his *dōjō*. As one of the longest-standing and highest-ranking U.S. members of the *Nippon Kobudō Jikishin-Kai* USA, Pellman *Sensei* currently heads the Indiana *shibu* (branch *dōjō*).

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Mastering Eishin-Ryū Swordsmanship

Updated and expanded with over 1,700 new photographs of practicing *iaijutsu* masters and in-depth explanations of system techniques, *FLASHING STEEL* is the most comprehensive guide available in *iaijutsu*, the premier martial art of the samurai warriors of feudal Japan. Unlike *kenjutsu (kendō)*, *iaijutsu* begins with the sword still in its scabbard. In the *Muso Jikiden Eishin-Ryū Iaijutsu* tradition, an inner and outer calm is developed that is tremendously intimidating to the opponent. Sword skills require a philosophical training, which permeates the entire life outside the *dōjō*, building compassion and self-discipline.

FLASHING STEEL describes and pictures forty-two *kata* (formal training patterns) that govern this system, with ten partner exercises applying *iaidō* principles in realistic attack and defense situations. These *kata* are also widely practiced by students of *kendō*, *aikido*, and the other martial arts that use swordsmanship.

"At last! The martial arts have long awaited a book on genuine *iaidō*. It could only have been done properly through a Japanese-American collaboration like this—MASTER SHIMABUKURO, with his unparalleled expertise and classical training, and MR. PELLMAN, who has translated this unique philosophy into understandable Western terms. *FLASHING STEEL* will be a true milestone of the art."

— Alfonso Gomez, Martial Arts Director, University of California, San Diego, CA

"Why would a t'ai chi ch'uan student and instructor for over twenty years want to take up *iaidō*? I was curious, initially, to explore a different tradition and approach. But I have been captivated by the experience and insights *iaidō* offers. It begins with a stillness, an upright posture, breath natural, mind calm. Then the draw: the bright flash and hiss of steel that reveal the subtle qualities of the substantial (sword) cutting through the insubstantial (air). I encourage others—newcomers or current *iaidō* enthusiasts—to acquire this remarkable book and explore the mysteries of *iaidō*."

— Michael Conniry, T'ai Chi Ch'uan Instructor, Grossmont/Cuyumaca Colleges, El Cajon, CA

MARTIAL ARTS

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